CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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NIA files chargesheet in Pahalgam terror attack case

NIA chargesheet names LeT, TRF and seven accused, detailing Pakistan-backed conspiracy behind the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people

JAMMU

Nearly eight months after the devastating terror strike in Pahalgam, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has named a senior Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) commander among seven accused in its chargesheet related to the case. The attack, carried out on April 22, claimed 26 lives, most of them tourists, sending shockwaves across the country.

The 1,597-page chargesheet identifies five individuals and two terrorist organisations — Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and its proxy, The Resistance Front (TRF) — for their alleged roles in planning, facilitating and executing the attack. The NIA has charged LeT and TRF as entities, detailing what it describes as Pakistan's larger conspiracy behind the incident, supported by documentary and technical evidence.

"Pakistani handler terrorist Sajid Jatt is also named as an accused in the 1,597-page chargesheet, filed before the NIA special court, Jammu," a statement issued by the anti-terror agency said.

According to the agency, Sajid Jatt, a top LeT commander based in Pakistan, acted as the principal handler of the Pahalgam attack. The chargesheet also names three Pakistani terrorists — Suleman Shah, Habeeb Tahir alias Jibran, and Hamza Afghani — who were killed during an encounter with security forces near Srinagar in July. The accused and the terror outfits have been booked under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, the Arms Act, 1959, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The NIA has additionally invoked sections relating to waging war against India.

Further, the agency has chargesheeted two local men, Parvaiz Ahmad and Bashir Ahmad, who were arrested on June 22 for allegedly sheltering the terrorists.

Key Highlights

- NIA names seven accused, including LeT commander, in Pahalgam terror attack
- LeT and TRF held responsible for planning and executing the April 22 attack
- Sajid Jatt identified as principal handler and TRF operational chief from Pak
- 3 Pak terrorists and two local men also chargesheeted under multiple laws

> "Pakistani handler terrorist Sajid Jatt is also named as an accused in the 1,597-page chargesheet, filed before the NIA special court, Jammu." —NIA statement

Who is Sajid Jatt?

Sajid Jatt, known by multiple aliases including Saifullah, Numi, Numan, Langda, Ali Sajid, Usman Habib and Shani, was designated an "individual terrorist" under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in October 2022.

Investigative agencies believe he operates from Lashkar-e-Taiba's headquarters in Islamabad, Pakistan. He is described as a key operational commander of The Resistance Front (TRF) and is believed to play a central role in recruiting cadres, arranging funding and facilitating terrorist infiltration into the Kashmir Valley.Security agencies link Sajid Jatt to several high-profile terror attacks. He is alleged to have been the chief conspirator behind the 2023 Dhangri massacre, the attack on an Indian Air Force convoy in Poonch in May 2024, and the Reasi bus attack in June 2024. He is also accused of extending logistical and operational support to so-called "hybrid terrorists" operating in Jammu and Kashmir. Owing to his extensive role in planning, coordination and execution of attacks, Sajid Jatt is regarded by intelligence agencies as one of the most dangerous and influential figures within the terror network active in the region.

Govt introduces 3 key bills in LS, defers MGNREGA

NEW DELHI

On Monday, the Modi government tabled three significant Bills in the Lok Sabha while deferring the proposed overhaul of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The three Bills—aimed at opening the nuclear power sector to private players, reforming higher education, and repealing obsolete laws—faced immediate resistance from I.N.D.I.A MPs, who raised concerns over excessive centralisation, federal overreach, and Hindi naming inconsistencies.

The Bills introduced were: the Repealing and Amending Bill, 2025, Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhisthan Bill, 2025, and the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025. The MGNREGA-related VB G RAM Bill, 2025, intended to rename and modify the scheme, was not taken up, drawing criticism over the exclusion of Mahatma Gandhi's name and potential financial strain on states.

The SHANTI Bill, tabled by Minister Jitendra Singh, seeks to repeal the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, establish statutory authority for the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, and allow private sector participation in civil nuclear energy. Opposition leaders, including Manish Tewari and NK Premachandran, objected, citing sweeping executive powers, profit-driven privatization of nuclear projects, and limited judicial remedies.

The Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhisthan Bill, introduced by Dharmendra Pradhan, faced objections for centralising control over education and undermining state autonomy, while the Repealing and Amending Bill drew criticism over insufficient time for review. The government has agreed to refer all three Bills to Parliamentary committees for further scrutiny.

MGNREGA rename row: Tharoor calls it 'unfortunate'

New Delhi

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor called the debate over renaming MGNREGA "unfortunate," stressing that the government's proposed VB–G RAM G Bill does not conflict with Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy. He highlighted the harmony between Gram Swaraj and Ram Rajya, arguing that portraying the change as a rejection of Gandhi's legacy is misleading. Tharoor clarified that his objection lies in removing Gandhi's name from the flagship rural employment scheme, urging caution against generating divisions where none exist.

Messi concludes GOAT India Tour with Delhi leg

NEW DELHI

The Lionel Messi GOAT India Tour concluded in Delhi at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, offering fans a chance to see the football icon up close after a chaotic start in Kolkata. Spectators filled the stands, while a handful of Indian celebrities and dignitaries witnessed the event from inside the stadium. Despite the tour's turbulent opening, the Delhi leg delivered the experience fans had eagerly awaited.

Messi addressed the crowd in Spanish, saying, "Gracias Delhi! Hasta pronto," which elicited enthusiastic cheers. He expressed his gratitude for the warmth and support shown during the tour, describing the reception as "a unique experience." Messi and his fellow stars played football with children before being presented with a T20 World Cup ticket and an Indian jersey by the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), Jay Shah.

An embarrassing moment for the Rekha Gupta-led Delhi government, a section of the crowd jeered with chants of "AQI, AQI" as the Chief Minister approached the podium near football legend Lionel Messi in the national capital.

Final farewell to veteran leader Shamanuru Shivashankarappa

DAVANAGERE

Davanagere witnessed the final rites of senior politician, philanthropist, and revered Veerashaiva Lingayat leader, Dr. Shamanuru Shivashankarappa, who also served as the National President of the All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha and as a legislator. The rites were conducted on Monday evening at 5:30 PM near the samadhi of his wife, Parvathamma, at Kalleshwara Rice Mill premises, following Veerashaiva Lingayat traditions. The ceremony included full state honours, with the Indian national flag draped over his mortal remains, later handed to the family, and a three-gun salute by the police.

Dr. Shivashankarappa's body was brought to the residence of his son, Minister S.S. Mallikarjun, for final viewing by family, dignitaries, and religious leaders. Thousands of well-wishers, staff of Bapuji Vidya Samsthe, and local residents also paid respects. A public viewing was arranged at the high school grounds at noon, followed by a procession through the city to Kalleshwara Mill, where the final rites were performed.

The ceremony was attended by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Union leaders Mallikarjun Kharge, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, state ministers, MLAs, opposition leaders, and senior religious heads from various Veerashaiva Lingayat Peeths.

CM condoles Dr. Shamanuru's passing

Belagavi: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah condoled the demise of senior Congress leader and former minister Shamanuru Shivashankarappa in the Legislative Assembly. Legislators across parties paid tribute to his integrity, after which the House was adjourned as a mark of respect.

Opposition seeks one-week extension of Assembly session

BELAGAVI

Opposition Leader R. Ashoka has written to Speaker U.T. Khader urged a one-week extension of the ongoing Karnataka Legislative Assembly's Winter session, citing the need for detailed discussions on several pressing issues. He pointed out that although the Belagavi session was scheduled from December 8 to 19, it was curtailed by two days due to unavoidable reasons, leaving many important matters unaddressed.

> There are many burning issues concerning the state, pending discussion in the session. To find solutions to all these issues, I request you to extend the current session for another week.
> —R. Ashoka, Oppn Leader

Ashok said legislators from North Karnataka had raised serious concerns related to regional development, deteriorating law and order, and governance failures, but the Chief Minister and concerned ministers are yet to respond adequately. He also flagged poor utilisation of funds across departments and sought time for comprehensive debate.

Highlighting welfare issues, Ashoka noted that over 3.22 lakh ration card applications remain pending across Karnataka, with a significant number from North Karnataka districts and Bengaluru. He stressed that such critical public concerns require immediate discussion and solutions. Therefore, he urged the Speaker to take a prompt decision to extend the session by a week in the interest of effective legislative scrutiny.

QUICK READ

Omar Abdullah distances INDIA Bloc from Cong rally

NEW DELHI: Amid the Congress's relentless campaign against alleged vote theft and electoral irregularities, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference (JKNC) leader Omar Abdullah on Monday distanced himself from the issue and said the "INDIA bloc has got nothing to do with it." "The INDIA bloc has got nothing to do with it. Every political party is at liberty to set its own agenda.

Draft electoral rolls to be published across 5 states

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission will release the draft electoral rolls for West Bengal, Rajasthan, Goa, Puducherry, and Lakshadweep on December 16, 2025, officials have confirmed. This follows a special intensive revision process during which Block Level Officers (BLOs) collected and verified filled enumeration forms from voters to ensure accuracy. In addition to the online publication, hard copies of the draft rolls will be shared with all political parties.

AUSTRALIA TIGHTENS GUNS LAWS

Australia to tighten gun laws after Bondi Beach attack

SYDNEY

Australian leaders on Monday pledged swift action to strengthen the country's gun control regime following a deadly shooting at a Hanukkah celebration on Sydney's Bondi Beach that killed at least 15 people, including a child. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese described the attack as an act of antisemitic terrorism that shook the nation, as flags were lowered to half-mast across Australia in mourning.

The shooting occurred during the "Chanukah by the Sea" event, where hundreds had gathered to mark the Jewish festival amid peak summer crowds at the iconic beach. Two gunmen opened fire, triggering panic and drawing national attention to what leaders say is a worrying rise in antisemitic incidents.

In response, Albanese said the government would propose tougher national gun laws, despite Australia already having some of the strictest firearms regulations in the world. Proposed measures include limits on the number of guns an individual can own and periodic reviews of firearm licences. These steps would mark the most significant update to the National Firearms Agreement since 1996, when rapid-fire rifles were effectively banned after the Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania.

"The government is prepared to do whatever is necessary," Albanese said, stressing that public safety must come first. Political leaders across parties agreed on the need for urgent reforms, while mourners gathered at Bondi Pavilion, laying flowers and offering prayers in memory of the victims.

Points to Ponder

- Police shot two suspected gunmen, identified as a father and son.
- The 50-year-old father died at the scene of the attack.His 24-year-old son remains in a coma in hospital, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said.
- Police have not released the identities of the suspects.
- At least 38 other people are receiving treatment in hospitals.

QUICK READ

Two women killed in road accident on NICE Road

Bengaluru

Two women were killed after being hit by a car while crossing the road near the Hosakerehalli toll plaza on NICE Road, the police said. The deceased have been identified as Rangamma (45) and Chaudamma, residents of RR Nagar. Both were natives of Yadgir district and worked as labourers with a private contractor in the city. The incident occurred around 6.15 pm when an SUV knocked them down as they were crossing the road on their way home. The driver fled the spot following the accident. However, the Kengeri traffic police later traced and identified the suspect as Satyanarayana. Further investigation is on.

Hundi theft shocks village

Bengaluru

Thieves broke into the Lord Anjaneya temple at Tirumalapura village in Nelamangala taluk and decamped with cash and valuables. The theft occurred a week after the temple's inauguration near T. Begur, following the completion of the 48-day mandala pooja. Since the opening, miscreants are suspected to have stolen ₹40,000–₹50,000 from the hundi and a brass lamp pole valued at around ₹20,000. Villagers were scheduled to count the hundi collections on Monday. Nelamangala Rural police have registered a case and launched an investigation.

KASAPA City Unit held just one literary meet in 4 years

Bengaluru

Owing to inadequate funding, support and encouragement from the central unit of the Kannada Sahitya Parishad (KASAPA), the City District Unit has managed to organise only one District Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in the last four years. The executive committee led by M. Prakasamruthi, elected president of the city unit, has completed its four-year term. However, the 17th District Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in the capital could not be held due to persistent administrative disputes with the central unit, particularly over the release of required funds.

Work Resumes on Kanteerava Studio Junction Underpass

After years of delays, underpass work finally restarts, raising hopes for commuters

BENGALURU

After being delayed for more than a decade, construction of the underpass at Kanteerava Studio Junction on the Outer Ring Road near the Dr Rajkumar Memorial in northwestern Bengaluru has finally regained momentum. The project, taken up by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), is seen as a crucial solution to ease traffic congestion and improve safety at what has long been a dangerous junction for both motorists and pedestrians.

The underpass connects Peenya on one side with the Kanteerava Studio main road leading towards Nandini Layout on the other. Work on the project began in 2011 with an initial estimate of ₹47.4 crore, excluding land acquisition costs. Over the past 14 years, nearly ₹100 crore has been spent, yet the structure remains incomplete due to prolonged litigation and delays in acquiring land.

According to BDA officials, about ₹39 crore has so far been spent on construction, while land acquisition costs have reached nearly ₹60 crore, taking the total expenditure to around ₹99 crore. At present, the ramp on the Peenya side and the central portion of the underpass beneath the Outer Ring Road are complete. Work on the remaining ramp, which had been stalled for years, has finally begun after utility lines were shifted and excavation commenced.

A senior BDA official said the remaining work could be completed within six months, though junior engineers estimate that it may take closer to 10 months. The prolonged delay had turned the junction into a traffic nightmare, with frequent accidents reported over the years.

The area above the underpass had been used as a parking zone for auto-tippers collecting solid waste and other vehicles, but it was recently cleared to facilitate construction. Meanwhile, the existing ramp from the Peenya side has become a dumping ground for construction debris, further complicating traffic movement. Surrounding roads are riddled with potholes, posing additional risks to commuters.

Traffic police personnel said they have repeatedly written to officials of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) seeking repairs, but received little response. "Many vehicles collide while trying to avoid potholes. We are then left to deal with accidents and casualties," a traffic policeman said, adding that officers were forced to temporarily fill potholes with debris and soil in the absence of official action.

With work finally resuming, commuters now hope the underpass will soon be completed and bring long-awaited relief to this accident-prone stretch.

Bulldozers in Cantonment railway land fears tree felling

BENGALURU

Cantonment Railway land woke to the sound of bulldozers, making enviornmentalists apprehensive, a few days after the state government withdrew its notification declaring the site as a Biodiversity Heritage Site.

According to Parisarakkagi Naavu, a group of enviornmentalists who were in the forefront in protecting the trees, bulldozers were brought to the site days after the government rolled back the notification.

While officials have maintained that no permission has been granted for tree-felling, activists say the presence of machinery itself is alarming.

The 8.61-acre land parcel is home to 368 mature trees, some over 70 years old, supporting birds, small wildlife and a naturally evolved ecosystem. "Following public opposition, including over 15,000 written objections, the state government had approved the area as a Biodiversity Heritage Site on September 10. However, the notification was withdrawn on December 6. When questioned, the officials cited that the land belongs to the Indian Railways and that the Centre had not been consulted and hence the notification was withdrawn," said Parvathi Srirama, State General Secretary, Parisarakkagi Navu. This rollback is deeply worrying, said Mahesh Basapur, Secretary, Parisarakkaagi Naavu.

Declaring a site as a heritage space and then withdrawing it without a clear explanation raises serious questions. These are not ornamental trees but decades-old, biodiverse trees. Once this land is lost, Bengaluru will never get back such a green space in the heart of the city.

Parvathi said that compensatory plantation cannot justify the loss.

Planting saplings cannot replace a 70 or 80-year-old tree. Bengaluru's climate is already deteriorating. Cutting these trees will only worsen heat, water stress and air quality, she said, adding that citizens are prepared to protest and approach the courts if required. Environmentalists have questioned the logic of rolling back biodiversity protection on jurisdictional grounds.

Whether the land belongs to the State or the Centre should not matter once its ecological value has been recognised, said Vinod Jacob, environmentalist and urban strategist.

This is one of the last remaining lung spaces in the Cantonment–Shivajinagar–Bamboo Bazaar stretch, an area that is already heavily overcrowded.

> Jacob flagged concerns over reports of proposed multi-storey construction on the land. Questions of water availability, traffic, parking and biodiversity loss have not been answered. Development should focus on restoring dilapidated structures nearby, not destroying established green cover, he said.

Banner confused public, no turf on Nandan ground: MLA Harris

BENGALURU

Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) Chairman and MLA, NA Harris, has assured people that the Nandan football ground will be accessible to the public even after the proposed renovation. He said the nature of the ground will remain the same and that no artificial turf would be installed.

Meeting a group of residents and players at Nandan ground, he claimed the confusion arose only because the banner announcing the renovation work displayed a football stadium with artificial turf. "The picture was wrong. I know everybody has to play, so I made it clear right in the beginning that there should be no turfing. People can play cricket, football, and hockey as well," he informed the gathering.

A lot of our local schools also need this space for their annual day and sports day events. There is no question of having turf, he said. Welcoming the assurance from the MLA, players requested facilities like water supply and nets to prevent balls from going out of the ground. We have already built the changing room. We want to add facilities like viewing galleries, toilets, drinking water, and floodlights, the MLA said, adding the drainage will be improved to avoid problems after rain.

Youth climbs temple building to steal hundis

BENGALURU

A 19-year-old was caught by locals while allegedly trying to steal donation boxes (hundis) from Sri Venkateshwara Temple in Bellandur. He was later handed over to police, who arrested him and released him on station bail. The accused, Lokesh alias Suraj Kumar, is a Bellandur resident. Police said he is "mentally unstable.

According to a complaint by a temple trustee, the incident occurred around 2.30pm when the priest spotted Lokesh trying to remove hundis and alerted the trustee. Lokesh allegedly used a ladder to climb onto the temple building and carried the boxes one by one, placing them on the roof before returning for more.

Chilly weather in B'luru, could break its record again

BENGALURU

The city is experiencing severe cold conditions over the last few days but, despite the foggy weather and cold wind, people are still coming out for walking and jogging to stay healthy.

Bengaluru is experiencing a biting chill, affecting daily life. The minimum temperature has dropped to 14–16 degrees Celsius. Due to the cold and chilly winds, people are hesitant to go out for morning walks. However, at Sankey Lake, people have been enthusiastic amid the cold and are still going for walks.

Bengaluru is experiencing foggy conditions with cold winds. The wind speed averages 16 kmph and people have dug out their woollies, wearing sweaters and caps to keep warm while walking. An elderly person was even spotted at Sankey Lake in a wheelchair.

Experts from the Indian Meteorological Department say temperatures could drop to 12 degrees Celsius in December. The lowest temperature was recorded in 2016. There is a possibility that this record could be broken again in December. Regardless, even though the Sun is shining in Bengaluru during the day, the chill is not letting up. So, it's better to take extra care of health during this time, they advised.

Police arrest serial molester

BENGALURU

A 27-year-old biker, who allegedly targeted women walking or riding alone in the evenings and molested them in public places, has been arrested by Kamakshipalya police in West Bengaluru. The accused, identified as T Vinod, a resident of Herohalli, would allegedly approach women after evening and in a sudden action tightly hug them and sexually assault them before fleeing the spot. Police said he specifically targeted women who were alone, either on foot or on two-wheelers. A senior police officer said that Vinod had been indulging in such acts for over a month. He was emboldened because none of the victims came forward to lodge a complaint. The arrest was made following a complaint filed by a woman who was riding her two-wheeler on December 2. When she slowed down near Srinivasa Circle at Sunkadakatte to avoid a pothole, the accused allegedly ran up to her, held her, and molested her.

350-400 MT RDF collected daily in GBA limits: CEO Karigowda

BENGALURU

In order to effectively manage solid waste in Bengaluru city, the information, education and communication programs undertaken by the Greater Bengaluru Authority's Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited for public awareness have increased the rate of waste segregation at source and also increased the rate of collection of low-value plastic RDF (Refused Derived Fuel). This is a bold step in solid waste management.

Currently, 350 MT to 400 MT of low-value plastic RDF is being collected daily, said GBA's Chief Executive Officer Karigowda.

Approximately 100-150 MT of waste is being sent to the waste to energy generation plant near Bidadi.

An agreement has been made to transport 200-250 MT of waste to the Dalmia Cement Limited unit in neighboring Kadapa district, and on Monday, the first day, a total of 160 MT of low-value plastic RDF is being transported.

Dalmia Cement Limited has entered into an agreement with Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited to accept up to 1,000 MT of low-value plastic RDF waste daily.

Dalmia Cement Limited will give Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) credits in the said process to Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited. This will benefit Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited financially.

MODEL WASTE MANAGEMENT

HSR layout residents turn 500kg of waste into compost

BENGALURU

Residents of Block B in HSR Layout's Sector 7 have launched a decentralised, block-level composting initiative covering 750 households, demonstrating how community-driven waste management can significantly reduce the city's dependence on landfills. The initiative, led by the HSR Citizens Forum, processes around 500kg of wet waste a day at source.

This translates to nearly 182 tonnes of waste annually being diverted from landfills, while also reducing the need for long-distance transportation of garbage.

As part of the project, 20 aerobic composters, two in each lane, have been installed across the block.

Residents segregate wet waste at home, which is collected by the Greater Bengaluru Authority's auto tippers and handed over to trained workers of the forum for on-site composting. The waste is mixed with dry leaf powder, cocopeat, inoculant compost, microbial powder, and cow dung slurry, and is turned once every 10 days.

The compost matures in about 45 days. According to the forum, on average, the block processes around 15 tonnes of wet waste every month and generates nearly five tonnes of compost. Of this, 50 percent is retained as brown material to sustain the composting cycle, while the remaining compost is distributed among residents and used to enrich parks and green spaces in and around the neighbourhood.

Shanthi Thummala, founding member of the HSR Citizens Forum, said decentralised composting offers a practical solution to urban waste challenges. Processing waste locally reduces landfill pressure and makes neighbourhoods cleaner and greener, she said.

48 flights delayed due to low visibility at Kempegowda International Airport

BENGALURU

A total of 48 flights were delayed at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) due to low visibility caused by dense fog on Monday morning.

The delays mainly took place between 4.14 am and 10.30 am. Of the 48, two were international flights, and the rest were domestic.

The airport has seen similar flight delays since early November. Both the north and south runways of the KIA are equipped with CAT III-B system, which is designed to provide support during low-visibility conditions. It provides accurate lateral and vertical guidance to pilots, ensuring a safe and aligned touchdown.

Despite this, flight operations at the airport remain impacted due to low visibility during the winter months, especially during the early morning hours.

Additionally, four flights to Delhi have also been cancelled. The cancellations have been attributed to extreme weather conditions in Delhi and consequent flight rotation.

QUICK READ

Container Truck Hits School Vehicle

Kamalapur

A container truck collided with a school vehicle near Rajanala Cross in Kamalapur taluk of Kalaburagi district. The school vehicle belonged to a private school from Hallikhed (B) village in Humnabad taluk of Bidar district. It was traveling to Kalaburagi for a wedding-related event when the accident occurred. The container truck hit the vehicle from behind at Rajanala Cross. As a result of the collision, passengers in the school vehicle suffered minor injuries. A case has been registered at the Kamalapur police station in connection with the incident.

Demand to Withdraw Hate Speech Control Law

Kalaburagi

Ram Sena leaders in Kalaburagi have demanded the withdrawal of the Hate Speech and Crime Control Bill–2025. Speaking to the media, they accused the state government of targeting Hindus since coming to power. The leaders alleged that the proposed law is being used as a tool to deliberately sideline Hindu organisations, Hindu leaders, and activists in a planned manner. They strongly criticized the government, claiming that the bill reflects bias against the Hindu community. Ram Sena has condemned the bill and urged the government to immediately withdraw it. They warned that if the government fails to do so, Hindu organisations across the state will launch large-scale protests in the coming days.

STATEWIDE EFFORT TO SUPPORT DISABLED INDIVIDUALS

Officials Urged to Ensure Timely Benefits for Persons with Disabilities –

BIDAR

Shashidhar Kosambe, Chairperson of the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, has urged officials to ensure that persons with disabilities receive government benefits in a timely manner.

On Monday, he inaugurated a one-day awareness program on "Child Protection" at the district panchayat hall in Bidar. The program was jointly organized by the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Directorate of Child Protection Services Bengaluru, District Administration, District Panchayat, Department of Women and Child Development, District Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens, and the District Child Protection Unit, Bidar. Participants included rehabilitation workers from rural and urban areas as well as officials working with persons with disabilities.

Speaking at the event, Kosambe emphasized that every district in the state should systematically identify persons with disabilities. He highlighted that the initiative should start effectively from Bidar and expand across the state to ensure that all disabled individuals in every community receive government benefits. He also stressed that funds reserved for persons with disabilities must be used properly to directly benefit them and should not be misused.

Harish Jogi from the UNICEF Child Protection Program and officials from the Deputy Commissioner's office in Koppal provided detailed information on the facilities available for persons with disabilities.

The program was attended by key officials including Surya Kant Biradar, Deputy Secretary of the District Panchayat; Sridhar M.S., Deputy Director of the Department of Women and Child Welfare; Rupa S., District Child Protection Officer; Seemappa, Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee Bidar; Sanjeev Kumar, member of the Juvenile Justice Board; Gaurishankar, Child Protection Officer; and rehabilitation workers from various taluks and urban areas, along with officials from several departments.

Vachana Discourse Inaugurated at Ashrama

BHALKI

Gurubasava Pattaddevaru, head of the Hiremath institution, said that the vachanas of Sharanas are a guiding hand in our lives. By studying their lives and vachanas, one can learn how to elevate and enrich life.

He spoke during the inauguration of the Vachana Darshana discourse organized by the Hiremath institution at the Channabasaveshwara Ashrama in Bhalki on Sunday, marking the 136th birth anniversary of Shatashree Dr. Channabasava Pattaddevaru.

Gurubasava Pattaddevaru explained that just as morning fog disappears with sunlight to reveal the path ahead, the challenges and confusions in life can be clarified through the light of wisdom found in vachana discourses. Such discourses are essential for navigating life effectively.

The speaker of the discourse, Prabhulingadevaru, added that just as one cleans the house daily to maintain hygiene, these discourses help cleanse the mind and guide it toward productive and meaningful living.

Quote: Prabhuling Swamiji will continue to shed light on Vachana Darshana until December 21. Devotees from across the district are encouraged to participate and gain spiritual and practical insights from these discourses.

—Gurubasava Pattaddevaru, Hiremath Institution, Bhalki

Sangamesh Gama, President of the Taluk Advocates' Association, said that the lives and teachings of the Sharanas provide solutions to many of life's challenges. He urged people to attend and benefit from more such discourses.

The event included rituals led by Vishwanathappa Biradar, Director of the Channabasaveshwara Ashrama, religious readings by Basavaraj Mare, President of Taluk Jagathika Lingayat Mahasabha, a welcome by Shivakumar Kamathane, President of the Discourse Service Committee, and hosting by Deepak Thamake.

Vachana Book Released at D.K.-Badure Wedding Ceremony

BIDAR

The Vachanas composed by Basavadi saints serve as guiding lights in our lives, helping us navigate like a source of illumination, said Dr. Basavalinga Pattaddevaru.

The release took place at the wedding of Dr. Mahalakshmi D.K. Sidram and Lakhan Badure, held at Ghale Function Hall on Monday, where the book of Vachanas of the great spiritual teacher Basavanna was unveiled. Dr. Pattaddevaru noted that the Vachanas emphasize values such as social equality, selfless service (Kayaka-Dasoha), inner purity, and simple living, and that incorporating these teachings into daily life can help shape a meaningful and virtuous life.

Youth leader D.K. Sidram, known for his service in politics and cooperative sectors, expressed happiness that the Vachana book was released during the wedding of his second daughter.

The event was presided over by Guru Basava Pattaddevaru of Hiramatha, Jagadguru Shivayogishwara Swamiji of Bhatambra Niranjana Math, and Swamiji Shivananda of Hulsuru Gurubasaveshwara Math. Among the attendees were MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale, former Naranja Sugar Factory President D.K. Sidram, youth leader Channabasava Balate, former president of the District Journalists' Association D.K. Ganapati, and former ZP member Pooja D.K. Sidram, along with several other dignitaries.

Talwar Community Demands ST Certificates

KALABURAGI

Leaders of the Talwar community from Kalaburagi and Yadgir have demanded Scheduled Tribe (ST) caste certificates and government job eligibility.

At a Kalaburagi press conference, Santosh Talwar of the Akhila Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Talwar Samaj stated that the Karnataka government had proposed reclassifying the Talwar community from Category-1 to ST. The Central government approved the proposal, passed the Rajya Sabha amendment, and the President issued the official gazette notification. Despite this, ST certificates have not been issued. Condemning the continued delay, he announced a "Belagavi Chalo" protest on December 17 to press their demands.

Cold Wave Pushes Egg Prices Up

RAICHUR

A sharp drop in temperatures over the past week has led to a steep rise in egg prices across Raichur district, leaving consumers feeling the pinch. Although egg production remains at an average level, increased demand during the cold season has driven prices upward.

Eggs that were available at ₹4 during summer are now selling for as high as ₹9 per piece. As people consume more eggs to maintain body warmth, demand has naturally surged. This price hike has affected anganwadi centres, hotels, bakeries, and omelette stalls alike.

According to the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), the current wholesale price in Bengaluru is ₹6.85 per egg, or ₹685 per 100 eggs, while the retail price stands at ₹7.16. In Hyderabad, eggs cost ₹6.56 each (₹656 per 100), and in Hospet, ₹6.25 per egg (₹625 per 100). Raichur district largely depends on egg supplies from Hospet and Koppal.

In Raichur's wholesale market, eggs are priced at ₹6.85 per piece and ₹205.50 per tray. In retail markets, medium-sized eggs sell for around ₹8, while larger eggs cost up to ₹9. Hotels generally prefer medium-sized eggs, whereas bakeries opt for larger ones, leading to price variations.

Egg trader Abdul Rauf said that egg prices rise every year with the onset of winter and demand is expected to remain high until February. Despite higher prices, consumer demand has not declined.

The district has only three layer poultry farms, all located in Bijanagere village of Raichur taluk, with capacities of 40,000 to 80,000 birds each. Most eggs are sourced from outside districts and neighboring states, and transportation costs further inflate prices.

Anganwadi workers continue distributing eggs to children despite rising prices and have urged the government to compensate the price difference.

Police Crack Multiple Theft Cases

KALABURAGI

The district police have successfully conducted a series of operations, solving four separate theft cases, including house burglaries, Superintendent of Police Adduru Srinivasulu announced at a press briefing.

In Gudur (S) village, police arrested Sunil Pawar in connection with a house burglary and recovered 51 grams of gold and 212 grams of silver, valued at ₹6 lakh. In Ijeri village, Mahmad Yunus was apprehended for breaking into a home and threatening a woman named Ameeri with a knife. During the operation, authorities seized 16 grams of gold worth ₹1.5 lakh.

In another case in Shahabad, Chirag Rathod was arrested for stealing from the Chandrala Parameshwari Temple in Honagunda village. Police recovered 10 grams of gold jewelry from the deity during the raid.

Additionally, Shahabad town police solved a bike theft case by arresting two minor boys and recovering three stolen motorcycles valued at ₹1.28 lakh.

Annual Day and Cultural Program at Sharanbasava Public School

BIDAR

Students should be kept away from mobile phones as much as possible and encouraged to maintain focus on their studies, urged H. Suresh, Deputy Director, School Education Department. He made these remarks while inaugurating the annual day and cultural program at Sharanbasava Public School near Goranalli on Friday.

Dr. Uma Deshmukh, Director of Lingarajappa Engineering College, highlighted the crucial role parents play in the overall development of their children.

School Principal Dr. Satish Pratapur stated that under the blessings of Dr. Sharanbasavappa Appa, and guidance from Sharanbasaveshwara Vidyavardhaka Sangha President Dr. Dakshayini, Secretary Basavaraj Deshmukh, and Ch. Dodappa Appa, the school and college institutions are driving an educational revolution in Kalyana Karnataka. He added that the institution strives to provide quality and value-based education to ensure a bright future for children, noting that last year the school achieved a 100% pass rate in the SSLC exams.

During the annual day, 8th-grade students paid a heartfelt tribute to Dr. Sharanbasavappa Appa through a dance performance. Students from various grades showcased a variety of artistic programs, including Yakshagana, Koravanji, Shiva Tandava, group dances, singing, and drama, enthralling the audience. Fellow students, parents, and teachers applauded and encouraged the performers.

The event was attended by Lingarajappa Engineering College Director Sharanbasappa Deshmukh, Principal Dr. Vinita Patil, with Lakshmi providing narration, Tara welcoming the guests, and Sujata offering the vote of thanks.

Pothole-Filled Road Makes Travel Difficult

LINGASUGUR

The Lingasugur–Guddanal–Hatti link road stretches about 16 km in total. The distance from Hatti to Guddanal is 8 km, and another 8 km connects Guddanal to Lingasugur. This road is an important connectivity route, as people from Hatti depend on Lingasugur to reach urban areas, and Guddanal serves as a key junction. However, the severely damaged condition of the road has turned daily travel into a risky task.

Under the second phase of the "Namma Grama, Namma Raste" scheme, the 8 km Lingasugur–Guddanal stretch was developed in 2013 at a cost of ₹3.46 crore. Due to poor maintenance over the years, the road has fallen into disrepair, forcing motorists to struggle for the past eight years. Commuters allege that the negligence of elected representatives and officials has led to the road's decline.

During the monsoon, water-filled potholes make it impossible to distinguish the road surface, resulting in frequent accidents, especially involving two-wheeler riders. At present, the entire 16 km stretch is in a dilapidated state, and traveling from Guddanal to Lingasugur feels like risking one's life, with commuters venting their frustration at the administration. Partial Development Raises Concerns

KNOWLEDGE WITH PURPOSE

NSS Camp Inauguration: Positive Thinking Key to Student Success – DDP Shahabadkar

BIDAR

Students with ambitious goals and a positive mindset can achieve remarkable success, said Chandrakant Shahabadkar, Deputy Director (Pre-University), School Education Department. He made these remarks during the inauguration of the 2025–26 National Service Scheme (NSS) special camp on Monday at the Government Girls' Pre-University College in Bidar.

Shahabadkar stressed that academic excellence alone is not enough; students must also engage actively in NSS and other social service activities. He explained that participation in NSS helps instill discipline, encourages cooperation, promotes a sense of unity, and motivates students to contribute meaningfully to society.

Gundappa Hudage, Deputy Principal of the Higher Secondary division, advised students to equip themselves to meet the demands of today's competitive environment. College Principal Vijaykumar Toranekar, who presided over the program, encouraged students to play an active role in keeping the nation clean and fostering its beauty.

The program saw participation from faculty members Ramesh Biradar, Abdul Majid, Sulekh, and Kavita. Students Farin, Bhavani, and their peers welcomed the gathering, while Supriya and her team performed the NSS anthem. Economics lecturer Rajshekhar Mangalgi delivered the welcome address, Basavaraj Mayur acted as the anchor, and NSS officer Varlakshmi Jadhav proposed the vote of thanks.

The event aimed to inspire students to balance academic learning with social engagement, cultivating leadership, teamwork, and a constructive outlook. It emphasized that a combination of knowledge, positive thinking, and community service can empower students to grow personally while making a meaningful impact on society.

One-Day Workshop on Enhancing MSME Efficiency under RAMP Scheme

VIJAYAPURA

A one-day awareness workshop on the Trades project under the "Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP)" scheme was held at Hotel Madhuwan International, Vijayapura. The event was jointly organised by the Department of Industries and Commerce, District Industries Centre (DIC) Vijayapura, Karnataka Technical Upgradation Council, Bengaluru, and Karnataka Technical Advisory Services (TEXSAK), Bengaluru.

Siddayya B.E., Chief Manager of a leading district bank, highlighted various government schemes available for MSMEs and urged entrepreneurs to report difficulties in accessing bank credit. Shailayya H. Galgali, Chief Manager of the State Bank of India's SME branch in Vijayapura, explained that the Trades project offers a digital platform to help MSMEs receive payments faster through financial institutions, reducing delays and improving cash flow.

The workshop was attended by industry representatives and officials, including S.V. Patil, Peter Alexander, Gangadhar Sambanni, Sharath Babu, Gangadhar Desai, and Assistant Director Santosh Sajjan. The programme aimed to improve MSME efficiency, increase awareness of financial support schemes, and promote easier access to funding through digital solutions.

QUICK READ

Six people test positive for monkey fever

Shivamogga

Six residents of Bilkodi village in Hosanagar taluk have tested positive for monkey fever (Kyasanur Forest Disease – KFD). Last week, a 55-year-old woman from the village was diagnosed with the infection. Following this, the Health Department conducted tests on others in the locality, during which five more people were found to be positive. Officials said all the affected persons are currently stable and under observation. Health authorities noted that earlier, KFD cases were usually reported from January onwards, but this year infections have been detected as early as November. With vaccination against monkey fever having been discontinued for the past three years, the department has stepped up surveillance. Concern has also been expressed as positive cases are emerging in humans even when no infection is detected in ticks or dead monkeys in some areas.

Bomb threat email to RTO office in Mangaluru

Mangaluru

The Regional Transport Office (RTO) in Mangaluru received a bomb threat through an email, triggering an alert among authorities. The threatening message was sent to the official email ID of the RTO office located near Nehru Maidan on Sunday night. In the email, unidentified miscreants claimed that bombs had been planted at five different locations. RTO officials noticed the email around 12 noon on Monday and immediately informed the police. Following the alert, teams from the Mangaluru City Assistant Commissioner's office and the Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) rushed to the spot. A thorough search was conducted inside the RTO office and across the surrounding premises. Police officials said security checks were carried out as a precautionary measure, and no suspicious objects were found during the inspection. Further investigation is underway to trace the source of the threat email.

Suttur Math community promotes social welfare: MLA

Suttur Math's 1066th birth anniversary celebrations promote social welfare, education, and community values, drawing widespread public participation

MANDYA

Suttur Math, one of the oldest and most revered monasteries in Karnataka, has long been promoting social welfare, education, and community values, said M.L.A. and Malavalli constituency representative, Narendra Swamy. Speaking at a press conference held at Malavalli Shanti College, he highlighted the ongoing efforts of the Math in eradicating superstition and supporting the community. He expressed gratitude on behalf of the people of Malavalli to Suttur Math for its enduring contributions.

The 1066th birth anniversary celebrations of Adi Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Shivyogigalu are currently underway in Malavalli. The festival procession, starting from Suttur, will pass through T. Narasipura and Belakavadi before reaching Malavalli. The inauguration of the grand event will be conducted by Hon'ble President Draupadi Murmu and Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot, with Union Steel and Heavy Industries Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and State Agriculture Minister Chaluvarayaswamy attending.

The five-day festival will feature cultural programs, theatrical performances, and community feasts, ensuring proper arrangements for food and safety. On December 21, the concluding ceremony will be held in the presence of Suttur, Adichunchanagiri, and Valmiki Peetha leaders, with CM Siddaramaiah and Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje attending.

Dr. Shri Channabasava Swamiji of Kanakapura Temple highlighted Suttur Math's centuries-long role in driving social and educational reforms. The administration has coordinated meticulously, decorating villages along the procession route and ensuring facilities like shelters, sanitation, drinking water, and Dasoha (community meal) for attendees. Over 1,000 police personnel, including two ASPs, have been deployed for security. The event is being conducted in a non-political, inclusive manner, celebrating communal harmony and reverence for spiritual traditions.

District officials, police, and local representatives have been actively involved in organizing the festival to ensure a safe, orderly, and culturally enriching experience for all participants.

Lorry catches fire, 40 motorcycles worth ₹45 lakh destroyed

BALLARI

A lorry carrying Yamaha bikes caught fire in Ballari, destroying 40 motorcycles worth ₹45 lakh; the driver escaped safely without injuries

A lorry transporting Yamaha motorcycles was gutted in a sudden fire incident at Autonagar on Anantapur Road in Ballari city on Monday, resulting in heavy financial losses. The blaze destroyed 40 brand-new motorcycles valued at around ₹45 lakh. Fortunately, the lorry driver escaped unharmed.

According to reports, the lorry had arrived in Ballari carrying motorcycles from Chennai and was parked on the roadside before proceeding to a showroom. Suddenly, flames broke out in the vehicle, followed by thick plumes of smoke. The driver, who was inside the lorry at the time, quickly sensed the danger and managed to get down in time, narrowly escaping a life-threatening situation.

Within minutes, the fire spread rapidly through the vehicle, engulfing the entire load of motorcycles. Local residents alerted the fire and emergency services, who rushed to the scene and began firefighting operations. However, by the time the flames were brought under control, all 40 motorcycles loaded in the lorry had been completely reduced to ashes.

The incident caused panic in the area for some time, with traffic movement affected along the busy Anantapur Road stretch. Fire officials said efforts were made to prevent the blaze from spreading to nearby vehicles and establishments.

The exact cause of the fire is yet to be determined. Preliminary suspicion points to a possible electrical short circuit, though officials said a detailed investigation is required to confirm the reason behind the accident.

A case has been registered at the Gandhinagar Police Station in Ballari, and further investigation is underway. Authorities are also assessing the extent of the damage caused by the fire. No injuries were reported in the incident, but the loss of property has been described as significant.

Police check post inaugurated to strengthen local security

KARKALA

A new police check post has been inaugurated near Baradi Cross in Kantavara village, under the jurisdiction of Karkala Rural Police Station, to enhance local law enforcement and community safety. The facility was officially opened by Dr. Harsha Priyamvada, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Karkala Sub-Division. During the event, he commended donors, the Rotary Club, the Gram Panchayat, and local residents for their collaborative support in making the project possible.

The check post, fully equipped with modern amenities, was constructed by Rashmi Constructions, owned by Vineesh. The Rotary Club installed Nelhasige tiles at the facility, with club president Naveen Chandra Shetty receiving recognition from the police department. Kantavara Gram Panchayat President Rajesh Kotyan was also honoured for his contributions.

Several dignitaries and officials attended the inauguration, including Karkala Circle Inspector Manjappa D.R., Assistant Inspector Prasanna S.N., City Police Officer Muralidhar Nayak, and Rotary Club secretary Chetan Nayak. Community members such as Samad Khan, Vasanth M, Balakrishna Devadiga, Arun Manj, and Chetan Kumar, along with police personnel and Gram Panchayat members, were present to witness the ceremony.

The new check post aims to improve surveillance, ensure rapid response to incidents, and strengthen the overall safety and security of the village and surrounding areas.

Poets' meet at Siddaganga Meditation centre

MANDYA

Poet and litterateur Kottathiraj opined that poetry is a revolution of letters born out of the fusion of human experiences and aspirations. He was speaking while presiding over the Poets' Confluence organised by Kasturi Sirigannada Vedike and the Kayakayogi Foundation at the meditation centre located in the Paramapoojya Dr. Sri Shivakumara Mahaswamiji Garden in the city.

Recalling the legacy of Pujya Siddagangashree, he said the threefold dasoha practiced by the saint is eternally memorable. Describing Siddagangashree as a living god and a great saint, he remarked that no poetry has sufficient words to fully portray such a towering personality.

He noted that while prose has its steady flow and poetry its rhythmic dance, both possess the power to reform society. Quoting P. Lankesh, he said a poet who does not challenge time and society is merely a clerk, not a true writer, and urged writers to become builders of society rather than passive record-keepers.

Kottathiraj emphasised that literature is an inner search and a dialogue with the present, and poets therefore carry a social responsibility to reform society through their writing. He advised emerging writers to study folk literature, Vachana and Dasa literature, and read works from Adikavi Pampa to contemporary writers to discover new forms and directions in their creative expression.

Inaugurating the programme, Kayakayogi Foundation president M. Shivakumar said human values have remained central to Kannada literature from Pampa to Rashtrakavi Kuvempu. He stressed the need for poets to create awareness to protect Kannada language, land, water, and identity, especially in the face of continued cultural and linguistic challenges.

Kasturi Sirigannada Vedike State President Pothera Mahadeva delivered the introductory address, stating that society progresses in the right direction through literature and culture. Seventeen poets recited their poems at the meet, which was attended by several noted writers and literary figures.

One-day training camp organised for SSLC students in Hude, Udupi

UDUPI

A one-day training camp for SSLC students was recently organised at the Salihat Group of Educational Institutions in Thonse Hude, jointly hosted with the support of MEF. The programme aimed at equipping students with effective strategies to face examinations with confidence.

Inaugurating the workshop, MEF Honorary President Shabih Ahmed Khazi said that appearing for examinations is an art in itself. He stressed the importance of managing time efficiently, understanding questions clearly, recalling answers effectively, and maintaining self-confidence to achieve success in exams. He encouraged students to remain calm and focused while writing their examinations.

Salihat Educational Institutions trustee Nihal Kidiyur provided guidance to the students, motivating them to prepare systematically and stay disciplined in their studies. National trainer and head teacher Rajendra Bhatt served as the resource person and conducted interactive training sessions. He shared practical tips on exam preparation, answer-writing techniques, stress management, and revision methods to help students perform better in the SSLC examinations.

Several dignitaries were present on the dais, including MEF Treasurer G. Ashraf Hude, Administrator Aslam Haikadi, and Salihat PU College Principal Divya Pai. The programme was compered by school headmistress Sunanda, who ensured smooth conduct of the event.

Students from around four different schools participated actively in the training camp, making use of the guidance provided. The organisers expressed hope that the workshop would help students improve their performance and approach the upcoming SSLC examinations with greater confidence and clarity.

Four arrested in Kotatttu murder case in Brahmavara

KOTA

Police have arrested four accused in connection with the murder of Santosh Mogaveer (30), which occurred at Padukere in Kotatttu village under the Brahmavara limits. The arrested persons have been identified as Darshan (21) from Parampalli Padukere, Kaushik (21) of Neeradi Jeddu in Sasthan Pandehwar, and Ankit (19) and Sujan (21), both residents of Padukere, Kotatttu. All four accused have been produced before the court.

According to the police, the incident took place on the evening of December 14. Santosh, along with Poojari, Sachin, Chetan, Kaushik, Sujan, and Darshan, had gone to a bar and later proceeded to the Padukere Circle, where they had food and were engaged in conversation. During this time, a heated argument reportedly broke out between Darshan and Kaushik on one side, and Ankit and Sujan on the other, over issues related to Santosh's family and alcohol consumption.

The verbal altercation soon escalated, with the accused allegedly abusing Santosh using obscene language and then assaulting him collectively. During the scuffle, Darshan is said to have struck Santosh forcefully on the back of his neck with his hand, while Kaushik also allegedly hit him. Another individual, Rajath, reportedly intervened and tried to stop the fight.

However, Santosh collapsed at the spot after sustaining the injuries. He was immediately rushed to a private hospital in Brahmavara for treatment. Doctors who examined him declared that Santosh had already succumbed to his injuries.

Following the incident, a case was registered at the Kota Police Station. Police officials said further investigation is underway to ascertain the exact sequence of events leading to the death and to determine individual roles in the assault.

Private bus gutted in mid-road fire incident in Kodagu

MADIKERI

A private bus was completely gutted after it caught fire in the middle of the road on Monday morning on the Makutta highway in southern Kodagu district. The bus, which belonged to a private operator from Kerala, reportedly caught fire suddenly near the Anjaneya temple in Makutta.

The driver and conductor, who were the only occupants at the time, managed to escape unharmed. On receiving information, personnel from the fire and emergency services and the police rushed to the spot and attempted to douse the flames. However, by the time the fire was brought under control, the bus had been entirely reduced to ashes.

No casualties were reported in the incident. The exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, and authorities have begun an investigation to determine what triggered the blaze.

FOCUS ON SLOW LEARNERS

Special focus on slow learners to improve SSLC results

CHITRADURGA

District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) Principal M. Nasiruddin has called upon teachers to pay special attention to academically backward and slow-learning students to ensure a 100 per cent pass rate in the SSLC examinations.

He was speaking while presiding over a six-day district-level training programme for social science teachers held at the DIET campus in Chitradurga on Monday. The training covered refresher courses, Gyanasetu, value education, and provisions of the POCSO Act. Nasiruddin said recent changes in the SSLC examination pattern, along with the release of a blueprint and four model question papers, would help students prepare better and improve pass percentages.

He informed that over the past month, more than 580 government high school assistant teachers in the district have been trained on refresher modules, Gyanasetu, POCSO Act, value education, career guidance, and child rights protection. Stressing the need for holistic education, he said career guidance is essential to help students choose future academic paths, while value education is necessary to build a responsible society. He expressed concern over the increasing number of old-age homes, terming it a worrying social trend.

Deputy Director of the School Education Department M.R. Manjunath said that despite being a drought-prone district, Chitradurga has continued to make progress in the education sector. He urged teachers of all subjects to instil confidence among students, remove exam-related fear, and work collectively towards achieving 100 per cent SSLC results.

Training nodal officer Gnaneshwari outlined the objectives and structure of the programme, stating that it should directly contribute to improving academic outcomes. On the occasion, the "Mission 40+" initiative designed for slow learners in social science was also launched. Several education officials, DIET lecturers, subject inspectors, and social science teachers from across the district participated in the programme.

KSRTC increases incentives for accident-free drivers

KSRTC has announced enhanced incentives and allowances for accident-free drivers, effective January 1, 2026, to encourage road safety

BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has announced an increase in incentive payments for drivers who maintain an accident-free record. The decision was issued by KSRTC Managing Director Akram Pasha, aiming to reward and motivate safe driving practices across the state.

Previously, drivers awarded the Chief Minister's Gold Medal received a cash prize of ₹5,000. Under the revised scheme, this amount has been doubled to ₹10,000. Additionally, the monthly allowance for these medal-winning drivers has been raised by ₹500–1,000.

Similarly, drivers who have been awarded the Silver Medal earlier received ₹2,500 as a cash reward. This amount has now been increased to ₹5,000, while their monthly allowance has been doubled from ₹250 to ₹500. These enhancements are designed to recognise the dedication and professional conduct of drivers who contribute to KSRTC's safe and reliable services.

The revised incentive structure will come into effect from January 1, 2026. KSRTC officials emphasized that this initiative is part of broader efforts to encourage road safety, reduce accidents, and reward drivers for exemplary performance. By offering higher cash rewards and allowances, KSRTC hopes to further instil a culture of responsible and accident-free driving among its workforce, ultimately ensuring safer transportation services for passengers across Karnataka.

This move aligns with the corporation's ongoing commitment to promoting safety, accountability, and excellence within its operations, while also recognising the crucial role drivers play in maintaining public trust and service reliability.

DC urges 100% progress in national pulse polio campaign

BENGALURU RURAL

District Collector A.B. Basavaraju urges parents to vaccinate all children under five during December's Pulse Polio Campaign to achieve full coverage

District Collector A.B. Basavaraju has urged parents to ensure that all children under five receive the free polio vaccine during the upcoming National Pulse Polio Campaign, scheduled from December 21 to 24, 2025. Speaking at a preparatory meeting at the District Collectorate, he emphasized the importance of achieving 100% coverage in the district.

Polio booths will be set up across all government taluk hospitals, community health centers, 24/7 primary health centers, urban health centers, selected schools, and Anganwadi centers. Additional booths will be established at public spaces such as bus stands, railway stations, markets, and toll plazas. Health workers are instructed to identify target areas, provide proper training, and ensure children who miss vaccination are reached through house-to-house visits, including migrant children.

The Collector also highlighted recent child mortality data, reporting 18 deaths among infants aged 0-1 years across the district from April to November, with additional deaths among children aged 1-5 years and three pregnant women. He stressed that health workers, nurses, and doctors play a vital role in safeguarding maternal and child health and called for raising public awareness to prevent further fatalities.

Hospitals are directed to conduct timely health checks, admit children when necessary, and ensure proper vaccination follow-up.

Any negligence or delay in care that leads to child or maternal deaths will invite strict action. The meeting was attended by district health and family welfare officials, including Dr. Seema Rudrappa Mabele and Dr. Hemavati, along with taluk health officers, doctors, and health department staff.

The Collector urged all stakeholders to ensure comprehensive coverage, prevent future tragedies, and achieve 100% success in the polio vaccination drive.

QUICK READ

Electrical safety workshop for engineering students

Chikkaballapur

A two-day workshop on electrical systems and safety was organised on December 10–11, 2025, for first-semester BE students of the CSE and EEE departments at Chintamani Polytechnic College, Chintamani University. The sessions introduced students to electrical circuits, types of equipment, key components, and fundamental principles of electrical safety. Participants were also taught safety regulations, protective measures, and proper handling of electrical tools and installations to prevent accidents.

The workshop was inaugurated by KV Venkataiah, Principal of Chintamani Polytechnic College, who emphasised the importance of combining technical knowledge with safety awareness. Faculty members, including Dr. G. Shivamurthy and other instructors, guided students through practical demonstrations and explained safe operational procedures. Students, along with teaching and non-teaching staff, actively participated in the sessions, gaining hands-on experience.

Police head constable dies after chest pain

Kolar

A police head constable died after experiencing sudden chest pain while on duty in Kolar on Sunday night. The deceased has been identified as Subramani, who was attached to the Nangali Police Station. According to reports, Subramani was on active duty in a 112 emergency response vehicle when he suddenly complained of severe chest pain. Colleagues immediately rushed him to a hospital for medical assistance. However, he breathed his last on the way to the hospital. Preliminary information suggests that he may have suffered a heart attack, though the exact cause of death will be confirmed after further medical examination. The incident occurred within the jurisdiction of the Nangali Police Station.

Two-day workshop on applied mathematics and engineering tools

CHIKKABALLAPUR

A two-day workshop was organised on December 10 and 11, 2025, for third-semester BE students of the Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) and Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE) departments at the Chintamani University Polytechnic College for the 2025–26 academic year.

The workshop focused on practical applications of matrices, vectors, and algebraic computations using computational operators and E-mail-based communication tools. Students were trained on how to apply mathematical concepts to solve engineering problems effectively. The programme also emphasized the practical utility of these tools in real-world engineering scenarios, enabling students to connect theoretical knowledge with hands-on applications.

The workshop was inaugurated by Anil Kumar, Head of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, who highlighted the importance of combining technical knowledge with applied skills. He explained how understanding mathematical structures and operators can enhance problem-solving capabilities in engineering projects.

Principal Dr. G. Shivamurthy, along with faculty members and staff, participated actively in the sessions and encouraged students to take full advantage of such training opportunities. The faculty guided students through exercises and practical demonstrations, ensuring that participants gained a clear understanding of concepts and their applications.

Chitradurga mega Lok Adalat unites nine couples

CHITRADURGA

During the final Mega Lok Adalat of 2025 held on December 13, nine couples in Chitradurga district resolved their marital disputes and officially reunited. The event was organized under the guidance of Principal District and Sessions Judges and Rona Vasudev, President of the District Legal Services Authority, following directives from the State Legal Services Authority. The Mega Lok Adalat addressed a total of 4,913 pending cases, of which 3,840 were resolved amicably. Additionally, 75,637 pre-existing cases were settled through consent. The cases included 168 cheque dishonor disputes, 48 non-compoundable criminal matters, 57 bank recovery cases, 80 motor vehicle accident claims, 47 property disputes, 116 enforcement cases, and 595 birth registration matters, all resolved through mutual agreement.

Students Must Focus on Emerging Technologies: Soumya

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Technical workshops provide students with practical exposure that goes beyond textbook-based knowledge, said Soumya, Head of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at the Chintamani Government Polytechnic College. She was speaking while inaugurating a two-day workshop titled "Introduction to Internet of Things Using Arduino for Engineering Applications", organised for third-semester BE students of the CSE and CSE–AI & ML departments for the academic year 2025–26.

The programme was held at the constituent technical college of Chintamani University. Soumya said the workshop was aimed at equipping students with industry-relevant skills and preparing them to meet current technological demands. She explained that the institution regularly organises technical workshops, seminars, and practice-oriented learning programmes to enhance students' technical competence. The objective of this workshop was to provide students with a clear understanding of the fundamentals of Internet of Things (IoT) technology and its practical applications.

She elaborated on the vast scope of IoT by citing real-time examples and demonstrating how the technology is used in various engineering applications.

Emphasising experiential learning, she noted that such workshops help students gain hands-on experience beyond theoretical concepts. She urged students to focus on applying technology productively and creatively to solve real-world problems.

Presiding over the programme, Principal Dr. G. Shivamurthy said that technical workshops play a crucial role in shaping students' future technological growth. He added that expanding such programmes in the coming days and introducing advanced technologies would further strengthen students' skills and career prospects.

Assistant professors N. Naveen and Aishwarya N. Kumar, along with students, teaching faculty, and non-teaching staff, were present during the workshop. The organisers expressed confidence that the programme would inspire students to deepen their interest in emerging technologies and enhance their practical knowledge.

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NAME CHANGE

I, **ASHMATH AFIFA KHANAM**, D/o Ashmath Khan, Resident of No. 31/B, 4th Cross, Lalji Nagar, Lakkasandra Extn, Adagodi, Bengaluru-560030, have changed my name to **AFIFA KHANUM**, vide affidavit dated: 15.12.2025 before notary G.DAYANANDA, Bengaluru.

Document Lost

I, Siddamma, resident of Tadasuru Bovi Colony, Tadasuru Post, Kasaba Hobli, Tiptur Taluk, Tumakuru - 572201, state that my title deed (Survey No. 324, Site No. 10) was lost in Tiptur on 13/02/2022 at around 12.41 pm.
If anyone has found it, kindly return it to the above address or contact this phone number: 7483594294.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VARALAKSHMAMMA H H (old name), a resident of NO 1460, NANJUNDAIAH LAYOUT, NEAR CANARA BANK, BEGUR ROAD, BEGUR POST, BENGALURU - 560068, KARNATAKA, INDIA, have changed my name to VARALAKSHMI (NEW Name) vide affidavit dated 15-12-2025, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

IN THE COURT OF THE II ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE & J.M.F.C AT DODDABALLAPURA
C. MIS.NO.1039/2025
BETWEEN:- Sri. C. Murthy ...PETITIONER
AND: The Commissioner (Birth & Death) Nagarasabe, Doddaballapura **... RESPONDENT**

Public Notice

Whereas the petitioner has filed the above petition under section 13(3) of the Registration of Birth and Deaths Act 1969 for seeking direction of the respondent authorities to issue death certificate of his grandfather of Sri. Hanumappa S/o Late Munishami @ Undadiga who was died on 08/06/1984 in home at Kacheripalya, Nagarasaba Ward No.31, Doddaballapura Town, Doddaballapura and the Hon'ble court has posted for the above petition on 17.01.2026 for hearing of the petition. If any person/s desire to oppose the said petition or claim or interest shall appear before the Hon'ble court in person or by pleader duly interested at 11.00AM failing which the said petition will be disposed on enquiry.
Given Under my hand seal of this Court today ie, on 15.12.2025

Order by court
Chiefministerial Officer, II Addl. & J.M.F.C Court, Doddaballapura
Amarnath M Advocate, Sree. Gururaghavendra Law Chamber, Ground Floor, 6th Floor, 6th Cross, Opp. Court Complex, Doddaballapura

CHANGE OF NAME

I, PUSHPA G (old name), a resident of No 322, KEMBATHALLI, BANNERGHATTA ROAD, GOTTIGERE POST, Bengaluru, 560083, Karnataka, INDIA, have changed my name to PUSHPA (NEW Name) vide affidavit dated 15-12-2025, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SONU DARJEE W/o BRAJMOHAN SINGH, R/o No 12, Theresa Anthony, 20th Cross, Ejipura, Viveknagar, Bangalore, Karnataka-560047, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SONU ASWAL.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SOMAPPA OR SOMESHA (old name), a resident of No 322, KEMBATHALLI, BANNERGHATTA ROAD, GOTTIGERE POST, Bengaluru, 560083, Karnataka, INDIA, have changed my name to SOMASHEKARA (NEW Name) vide affidavit dated 15-12-2025, sworn advocate and notary Mohammed Hussain K.

CHANGE OF NAME

I KUNDAN S/O PARMANAND JHA, R/O Apartment no: B-7166, Sixteenth floor, Wing 7, Sobha Dream Gardens, Bellahalli Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560064, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KUNDAN JHA.

Government of Karnataka
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION KALABURAGI
No : EE/PRED/KLB/KKRDB /TS2/TND/2025-26/4970 Date : 12/12/2025

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through E-procurement Two Cover System)

1) Name of work: 1. Construction and installation of rain water harvesting provision of cooking utensil setup, science lab equipment, interactive display boards with 1.75 mtrs display and it interactive desktop computer with all in one printer of Govt. boys High School building at Kallur K Jewargi Taluka Indent No.12643, 2. Construction of playground with swings, slides and other equipment, installation of RO plant and interactive desktop computer with all in one printer of Govt. Boys High School building at Jewargi town Indent No.12714 3. Providing Toilet, Sophisticated Science Equipment kits with stand, Sophisticated Maths kit, Digital Library with UPS Battery, 12 Almaras, 12 Tables, Sports Equipment Kits, Function hall, RO Plant, Green Board-15 and other infrastructures works to Government Girls High School in Chincholi Town, Chincholi Taluk Indent No.12719, 2) Head of account: **KKRDB / DMF**, 3) Amount put to tender: Indent No.12643 **Rs. 83,93,223.35,** Indent No.12714 **Rs. 24,21,570.55**, Indent No.12719 **Rs. 95,38,019.53,** 4) Class of Contractor: Manufacturer / Authorised Dealer / Supplier, 5) Issue of Blank Tender Documents: **12-12-2025 to 26-12-2025 upto 4.00 pm,** 6) Tender Form Fee: As per KPPP Norms, 7) E.M.D. Fee: Indent No.12643 Rs. 1,68,000/-, Indent No.12714 Rs. 50,000/-, Indent No.12719 Rs.1,91,000/-, 8) Receipt of completed tender documents: **26-12-2025 to 26-12-2025 upto 4.00 pm**, 9) Technical Bid Opening Date: **29-12-2025 After 11.00 am**, 10) Financial Bid opening Date: **30-12-2025 After 11.00 pm**, 11) For more details contact: Office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division, Opp: Karnataka Grameen Bank (PKGB) Head office, Kusnoor Road, Rajapur Kalaburagi, 12) Website Address: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR/Kalaburagi/854/KSMC&A/2025-26 **Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Kalaburagi**

City Municipal Council, Chikkamagaluru
Office: 08262 - 230420 Fax:0862232272 Commissioner : 08262 – 232272 Help Line: 08262-232222 E-Mail ID: comm_ckg@yahoo.co.in Website: www.chickmagalur.gov.in
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಸಿಎಂಸಿ/ಸಿಕೆಎಂ/ಜ.ಹಿ.ಅ/ಸಿ.ಆರ್/01/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 09.12.2025.

e-Procurement Tender Notice

Tenders are invited through e-procurement (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) from authorized vendors / distributors / suppliers, subject to conditions, for the supply of the following materials related to sewerage management under the AMRUT Scheme. Interested parties may submit tenders as per the prescribed conditions.

Sl No.	Details of work	Approx. Amount (Rs. in lakhs)	E.M.D. (in Rs.)
1	DMA/2025-26/IND 5383/CALL-2	100.00	1,02,716/-

Cost of Tender Form – As per e-procurement. Time Period: 03 Months
1. Last date for submission of tenders on e-procurement portal:24-12-2025 up to 17:30 hrs
2. Date of opening of Technical Bid:26-12-2025 at 11:00 hrs
3. Date of opening of Financial Bid:29-12-2025 at 11:00 hrs
Further details are available during office working hours and also on https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. If any changes are made due to any reason, the same will be published only on the e-procurement portal and will not be published in newspapers. Contractors are advised to regularly visit the KPP portal for updates.

Sd/- (Smt. B. Sheela Dinesh) President **Sd/- (Smt. Lalitha Ravinaik) Vice President**
City Municipal Council, Chikkamagaluru. **City Municipal Council, Chikkamagaluru.**
Sd/- (Sri B.C. Basavaraju, K.M.A.S.)
Municipal Commissioner, City Municipal Council, Chikkamagaluru
DIPR/ckm/No.118/ksmca/25-26/1390

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
ZILLA PANCHAYAT BELAGAVI
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION, CHIKODI
Email :preckdee@gmail.com Office Phone No: 08338-272131,
No.PRE/CKD/Db/kppp/2025-26/6075 Date: 11-12-2025

Kppp-SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

On behalf of Governor of Karnataka, State, Item Rate (Technical bids and Financial bids through E-Mode), E-Bids are invited for the following works through standard tender document KW-1, KW-2, KW-3, KW-4 (Standard Tender Document) from the eligible Contractors, registered in P.R.E. Department, & with kppp registration Bangalore, on "turn-key", basis only.
1]Last date of request for issue of blank E-bid document through
e-Procurment Date:Other works:11-12-2025 To 20-12-2025, 2]Bid Closing & submission Date: 21-12-2025 AT 04:00 PM, 3]Financial Bid Opening Date:22-12-2025 AT 11:00 AM, 4]Pre Bid Meeting Date: [KW-3 & 4 Works Only]:19-12-2025 AT 05:00 PM,5]Techanical Bid Opening Date: [KW-3 & 4 Works Only]:22-12-2025 AT 11:00 AM,6]Financial Bid Opening Date: [KW-3 & 4 Works Only]:24-12-2025 AT 11:00 AM, General Works Indent No's:21489, 21220, 21376, 21380, 21368, 21288, 21260, 21387, 13415, 14805, 7986, 18906, 17139, 17140, 19387, 17487,SC Works Indent No's:21266, 21264, ST Works Indent No's:21265, Category 1 Works Indent No's:21373, Category 2A Works Indent No's:21490, 21222, 20809, 15386,
For further details, the agencies may contact the office of the undersigned, during office hours, or may visit web site: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/

Sd/-Executive Engineer
DIPR/BGM/RO-NO-1482/KSMCA/2025-26 **P.R.E. Division, Chikodi.**

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾಡಳಿತ, ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್-ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ
ಕೊಠಡಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 207, 2ನೇ ಮಹಡಿ, ಬೀರಸಂದ್ರ ಗ್ರಾಮ, ವಿಶ್ವನಾಥಪುರ ಅಂಚೆ, ಕುದಾಣ ಹೋಬಳಿ,
ದೇವನಹಳ್ಳಿ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ – 562110
ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 080–29787452 E-mail :dhobangalorerural@gmail.com
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಸರಬ/ಟಿ1/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12.12.2025

ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನ

2025–26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಹಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಅವಶ್ಯವಿರುವ **ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯ ಉಪಕರಣಗಳನ್ನು ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡಲು ದ್ವಿ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. KPPP Tender Ref No: DHFWS/2025-26/IND2014** ಇ–ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಾಖಲೆಗಳು ಚಾಲ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿರುತ್ತದೆ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16.12.2025** ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಫಾರಂಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 03.01.2026** ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ: **kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/–
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕು.ಕ. ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ
ವಾಸಾಸಂ/ವಾಪ್ರ/4457/ಎಸ್.ಎಸ್.ಸಿ/2025–26

QUICK READ

Nitin Nabin offers prayers at Hanuman temple before leaving for Delhi

Patna

Senior BJP leader and Bihar Cabinet Minister Nitin Nabin, who has been appointed as the National Working President of the Bharatiya Janata Party, offered prayers at the Hanuman Temple in Patna on Monday before leaving for Delhi. After offering prayers at the Hanuman Temple in Patna, Nabin visited Rajvanshi Nagar, where he paid floral tributes to his late father and senior BJP leader Naveen Kishore Prasad Sinha at his statue. Interacting with media persons for the first time after assuming the new responsibility, Nitin Nabin expressed gratitude to the party and recalled his father's ideological legacy.

Abhishek Banerjee to hold meeting with party MPs on Dec 17

Kolkata

Trinamool Congress General Secretary and the party's Lok Sabha member, Abhishek Banerjee, will hold a coordination meeting with all the party MPs, both from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, on Wednesday in New Delhi. Although officially, Trinamool Congress has claimed that the meeting is intended to fix the responsibilities of the party MPs amid the crucial Assembly elections in West Bengal next year, party insiders said that one of the principal agendas of the coordination meeting on Wednesday is to sort out the internal differences between some party MPs, which often come out in public.

Lalan Singh hits out at Cong over vote theft claims

New Delhi

Union Minister and former JD(U) national president Rajiv Ranjan Singh, also known as Lalan Singh, on Monday hit back at the Congress over its allegations of vote theft. His remarks came as the Congress held a major rally at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan to intensify its campaign against the alleged vote fraud and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists. Party workers and leaders from across the country gathered in the national capital to participate in the mega rally. Speaking to reporters outside Parliament, Lalan Singh said, I have already said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had advised them (the Opposition) to win the confidence of the public by offering solutions.

Rijiju Condemns Anti-Modi Slogans, Seeks Cong Apology in Parliament

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju condemned slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, demanding a public apology from Congress leadership.

NEW DELHI

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday strongly condemned what he described as objectionable and dangerous slogans raised against Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a Congress rally, calling on the party's top leadership to issue an unconditional public apology in Parliament. Rijiju said mere denials or distancing from the incident were insufficient, given the gravity of the remarks allegedly made at the rally.

Speaking to reporters, the Union Minister said that the Prime Minister of India is not just a political figure but the democratically elected leader of the world's largest democracy, representing a nation of 1.4 billion people. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, is recognised by the world and by the people of our country. It is extremely sad and regrettable if some opposition members call for his killing. Mere denial is not enough, Rijiju said.

He stressed that accountability must come from the highest levels of the Congress Party. According to Rijiju, both the Congress President and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament must apologise openly on the floor of the House. If there is any sense of humanity and respect for the nation and society within the Congress Party, they should not delay in apologising openly in Parliament to the people of the country, he said, adding that only such a step would demonstrate that the party acknowledged its mistake.

Rijiju emphasised that while political rivalry is an inherent part of democracy, it must never descend into personal threats or incitement to violence. He noted that even among political opponents, there is a long-standing tradition of basic courtesy and mutual respect.

Shiv Sena (UBT) Slams Maharashtra Govt Over Missing Girls, Alleges Neglect Women's Safety

Shiv Sena UBT accused Maharashtra's Mahayuti government of ignoring women's safety amid rising missing girls cases statewide.

MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray (UBT) on Monday launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led Mahayuti government in Maharashtra, accusing it of prioritising political self-interest and self-congratulation while the state faces an alarming rise in cases of missing girls. The party alleged that governance has taken a back seat even as public safety, particularly the security of women and children, continues to deteriorate.

In a strongly worded editorial published in its mouthpiece Saamana, the Thackeray camp claimed that the state government is more focused on protecting traitors and serving a select group of political allies and cronies than addressing urgent social issues. According to the editorial, government machinery is being misused to safeguard political interests, while the safety of ordinary citizens, especially women and girls, has been pushed to the margins.

The editorial took particular aim at Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' recent announcement regarding the establishment of a grand Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Powai, Mumbai. The Thackeray camp described the move as a celebratory exercise that starkly contrasts with the grim reality unfolding in the state. It pointed out that Mumbai itself, where the proposed centre is to be set up, is witnessing a disturbing rise in cases of missing girls, raising serious questions about the government's priorities.

Linking the issue to welfare initiatives, the Shiv Sena (UBT) questioned the effectiveness and intent behind schemes such as the 'Ladki Bahin' Yojana. While financial assistance under the scheme is being highlighted by the government, the party argued that monetary benefits cannot compensate for the lack of safety and security.

Dense fog blankets parts of Rajasthan; visibility drops in many areas

JAIPUR

Dense fog blanketed several districts of Rajasthan on Monday morning, severely disrupting road visibility and traffic movement. Areas such as Sri Ganganagar, Jaisalmer, and Alwar were among the worst affected. Visibility dropped to as low as five metres in Sri Ganganagar and around twenty metres in Alwar, causing major inconvenience for daily commuters and slowing vehicular movement on highways and city roads. Fog conditions also prevailed in Hanumangarh until late morning, weakening sunlight and prolonging the chill.

The impact of the Western Disturbance weakened across the state, though light cloud cover persisted over large parts of the Bikaner, Jodhpur, Ajmer, and Jaipur divisions. Light clouds were observed in several districts, including Jaipur, Sikar, Dausa, Sri Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Nagaur, Alwar, Ajmer, and Barmer. Due to this weather pattern, maximum temperatures declined in many cities, while minimum temperatures increased as northerly winds weakened.

Maximum temperatures ranged between 24.5 degrees Celsius in Sri Ganganagar and 30.5 degrees Celsius in Jodhpur. Other notable readings included 26 degrees in Jaisalmer, 29.4 degrees in Barmer, 29 degrees in Bikaner, and around 27 degrees in Sikar and Jaipur. Alwar recorded a maximum of 25 degrees Celsius.

At night, cloud cover brought relief from biting cold, especially in the Shekhawati region. Minimum temperatures rose by up to three degrees Celsius over the past two days. Fatehpur recorded the lowest at 5.9 degrees Celsius, while Udaipur and Bhilwara saw minimums near 9.6 degrees Celsius.

With Tamil Nadu Assembly elections approaching, AIADMK has begun early preparations by inviting applications from aspiring candidates statewide.

AIADMK Begins Preparations, Invites Aspirants for Tamil Nadu Polls

CHENNAI

With the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections likely to be held in April next year, political activity across the state has gathered momentum, and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) has initiated early steps to prepare for the crucial electoral contest. Signalling its intent to move swiftly into election mode, the party on Monday announced the commencement of the distribution and acceptance of application forms from aspirants seeking to contest the forthcoming Assembly elections under its banner.

The decision follows recent meetings of the AIADMK's General Committee and Executive Committee, during which the leadership reviewed the political situation and discussed organisational preparedness. Tamil Nadu is expected to witness a fiercely contested election, with multiple political formations emerging as key players. The ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the AIADMK-led alliance, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led combine, and actor Vijay's newly launched Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) are all gearing up for what is being described as a multi-cornered fight.

At present, the AIADMK remains aligned with the BJP, and alliance dynamics are widely seen as a decisive factor in determining the electoral outcome. Political observers note that seat-sharing arrangements and coalition arithmetic will play a crucial role, especially given the presence of emerging political forces and shifting voter preferences.

Sources within the party indicate that the AIADMK leadership is keen on strengthening its alliance by exploring the possibility of bringing in other regional players, including the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK). There are also reports of indirect discussions aimed at broadening the opposition front to effectively counter the ruling DMK, although no formal announcements have been made so far. At the same time, there is considerable curiosity within political circles over how many seats the AIADMK may eventually allocate to its current ally, the BJP, if a formal seat-sharing agreement is finalised.

BJP's Shashank Mani slams objectionable slogans against PM Modi at Cong rally

NEW DELHI

BJP MP Shashank Mani Tripathi on Monday condemned the objectionable slogans raised against Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a Congress rally, saying that the use of such words against the Prime Minister is absolutely unacceptable. The controversy erupted after the Congress party's Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod rally, held at Ramlila Maidan in Delhi on Sunday. Several videos that surfaced on social media showed Congress workers raising provocative slogans such as Modi teri kabar khudegi while heading towards the rally venue, drawing sharp criticism from the BJP. Using such words against the Prime Minister is completely unacceptable. He is not just the leader of a political party, but the leader of the entire country.

He further added, Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds the highest constitutional position in the country. I do not think there is anyone with a higher stature than him. To use such words against the Prime Minister is absolutely unacceptable, and I strongly condemn it. If they continue to use such language, the public will once again teach them a lesson. The people of this country will give a befitting reply to such behaviour.

The BJP leader also reacted to the appointment of Bihar Minister Nitin Nabin as the BJP's National Working President. Speaking on the development, he said the decision reflects the party's broader vision of promoting capable leaders from the grassroots to national-level responsibilities.

This appointment reflects the BJP's vision of bringing individuals from lower-level positions, who possess extraordinary capabilities, to the national stage. Nitin Nabin's selection shows that the BJP believes that common people have the power to bring about great change, and the party gives them opportunities to rise to the highest organisational positions.

Rajasthan CM's birthday coincides with two years of BJP govt in desert state

JAIPUR

Rajasthan witnessed a rare and symbolic coincidence on Monday as December 15 marked both the completion of two years of the Bhajan Lal Sharma-led government and the birthday of the Chief Minister. Beginning his birthday on a spiritual note, CM Bhajan Lal Sharma visited the Moti Dungri Ganesh Temple and Govind Devji Temple in Jaipur early in the morning, where he offered prayers for the state's prosperity. Later, he reached the Pinjrapol Gaushala in Sanganer, where he served cows and took part in social service activities.

During his visit, the Chief Minister also inspected a blood donation camp and encouraged the donors, appreciating their contribution to society. Exactly two years ago, in December 2023, BJP leader Bhajan Lal Sharma took oath as the Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

With today marking the completion of his two-year tenure, the state government has planned various programmes and public events across Rajasthan till December 25 to highlight achievements and connect with citizens.

Bhajan Lal Sharma's political journey began in Atari village and spans over 37 years of active public life. After completing his primary education in his native village, he moved to Nadbai for secondary education, where he became associated with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). His commitment to ideology and organisation was evident early on.

In 1990, during the ABVP's Kashmir March, Bhajan Lal Sharma was arrested in Udhampur along with over 100 workers. He was again jailed in 1992 during the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Between 1991 and 1992, he was entrusted with responsibilities in the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, marking the beginning of his rise within the party organisation.

From grassroots activism to leading one of India's largest states, CM Sharma's journey reflects perseverance, discipline and organisational strength -- making today's coincidence of his birthday and the government's two-year milestone all the more significant for Rajasthan.

JAISHANKAR UAE ISRAEL

EAM Jaishankar to Co-Chair Key India-UAE Talks, Visit Israel for Bilateral Consultations

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar will co-chair the 16th Joint Commission and the 5th Strategic Dialogue with the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi on Monday, marking another significant step in strengthening India's engagement with key partners in West Asia. The meetings will be held with Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, following Jaishankar's participation in the Sir Bani Yas Forum, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed.

According to the MEA, the Joint Commission and Strategic Dialogue will focus on reviewing the full spectrum of India-UAE relations, including political cooperation, trade and investment, energy, defence, technology, and people-to-people ties. India and the UAE share a comprehensive strategic partnership, and these high-level interactions are expected to further deepen cooperation across multiple sectors of mutual interest.

After concluding his engagements in the UAE, EAM Jaishankar will travel to Israel, where he is scheduled to hold bilateral consultations with his Israeli counterpart, Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar. The visit comes at a time of heightened regional tensions and underscores India's continued diplomatic engagement with Israel and the broader West Asian region.

Ahead of his visit, Jaishankar on Monday extended warm greetings to Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and the people of Israel on the occasion of Hanukkah. In a post on social media platform X, the External Affairs Minister wrote, Warmest wishes to FM Gideon Sa'ar, friends in Israel and all those celebrating Hanukkah around the world. May the Festival of Lights bring peace, hope, and joy to all. Chag Sameach! Responding to the message, Gideon Sa'ar expressed appreciation, replying, Thank you, dear friend!

Later in the evening, Jaishankar strongly condemned a deadly terrorist attack targeting Jewish people celebrating the first day of Hanukkah at Bondi Beach in Australia. The attack claimed several innocent lives and drew widespread international condemnation.

QUICK READ

Nominations for Haryana Good Governance Awards to close on December 17

Chandigarh

The Haryana government will confer Good Governance Awards to employees who have done commendable or innovative work related to Good Governance in 2024 and 2025 on the eve of Good Governance Day on December 25. The last date for submission of applications and nominations for the Haryana Good Governance Award Scheme, 2025 (Haryana Sushaasan Puraskaar Yojana, 2025), has been extended up to December 17, after which the online portal will be closed. A letter in this regard has been issued by Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi. This extension provides an additional opportunity for eligible employees to submit their entries showcasing exemplary and innovative work in governance.

Kangana Ranaut slams Cong after objectionable slogans against PM Modi

New Delhi

Reacting to the objectionable slogans allegedly raised against Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a Congress rally, BJP MP Kangana Ranaut on Monday said that wishing for someone's death or raising such slogans is deeply hurtful and unacceptable. The controversy erupted after the Congress party's Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod rally, held at Ramlila Maidan in Delhi. Several videos that surfaced on social media showed some Congress workers raising provocative slogans such as Modi teri kabar khudegi while heading towards the rally venue, drawing sharp criticism from the BJP.

Infrastructure drive reshapes Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch highway

Rajouri

The Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch highway is undergoing a historic transformation under the Central government's focused infrastructure push, with development works progressing at an unprecedented pace. The ambitious projects aim to improve connectivity, enhance safety, and accelerate economic growth in the sensitive border districts of Jammu and Kashmir. In Rajouri's Manjakote region, the construction of bypass roads, massive bridges, double-lane highways and tunnels is in full swing. These large-scale works are being supported by substantial central funding running into lakhs and crores of rupees, reflecting the government's commitment to modernising border infrastructure

Mizoram CM Lalduhoma Urges Banks to Expand Reach in Remote Areas

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma urged banks to expand services in remote areas, stressing agriculture-led growth at seminar.

AIZAWL

State Credit Seminar 2026-27
Date: 15th December 2025
Venue: Mizoram Assembly Conference Hall
National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
Mizoram Regional Office, Aizawl

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Monday called upon banks to significantly expand their outreach to people living in hilly and remote areas of the state, underlining the critical role of inclusive banking in supporting agriculture-driven development. He was speaking at the State Credit Seminar 2026–27 organised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

Addressing bankers and officials, the Chief Minister said that nearly 80 per cent of Mizoram's population continues to depend on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood, making agricultural development central to the state's overall economic growth. In this context, he emphasised the need for equitable access to banking and credit facilities, particularly in geographically challenging regions.

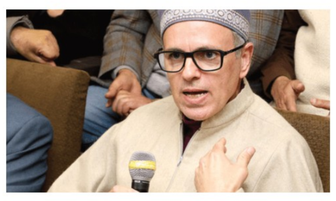
Lalduhoma pointed out that Mizoram currently has 278 bank branches, but a disproportionate number of them are concentrated in just three districts—Aizawl, Lunglei, and Kolasib—which together account for 180 branches. The remaining eight districts share only 95 branches, he said, urging banks to address this imbalance by extending their services to underserved and remote areas of the state.

The Chief Minister released the State Focus Paper 2026–27 during the seminar and said the Mizoram government has been implementing several development initiatives in close collaboration with NABARD, which he described as a vital catalyst for the state's progress. According to the State Focus Paper, a total credit outlay of Rs 4,349.71 crore has been projected for priority sectors in 2026–27.

Of the total outlay, Rs 2,260.99 crore has been earmarked for agriculture and allied activities, Rs 1,500.35 crore for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), Rs 6.55 crore for export credit, Rs 18.51 crore for education, and Rs 432.35 crore for the housing sector. Additionally, Rs 36.30 crore has been allocated for social infrastructure, Rs 24.67 crore for renewable energy, and Rs 70 crore for other sectors.

Political Interference in Institutions Must Not Be Tolerated: J&K CM Omar Abdullah

SRINAGAR



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah warned against political interference in institutions, stressing independent functioning and accountability.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday strongly asserted that political interference in public institutions should not be tolerated and must be addressed with utmost seriousness. Responding to reports of alleged political meddling in the functioning and staff engagement of a power project by a BJP MLA, the Chief Minister said such actions undermine the integrity and independence of key institutions.

Speaking to reporters at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar, Omar Abdullah described political interference in corporations and government departments as both unfortunate and worrisome. Political meddling in the functioning of corporations and departments is extremely troubling. Political interference should not happen, and such matters must be viewed very seriously, he said.

The Chief Minister further alleged that the situation has worsened due to the absence of an accountable elected system. Earlier, these institutions were answerable to an elected government, but now decisions are being taken without that system in place, he said, pointing to what he described as a breakdown in institutional accountability. He stressed that bodies such as the Power Development Corporation and other government departments must be allowed to function independently, free from external pressure or political motivation.

Omar Abdullah made these remarks during an event at SKICC where he felicitated beneficiaries under several flagship government schemes, including Mission YUVA, the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), and the Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP). Reiterating his government's development agenda, he said these initiatives are aimed at empowering youth, strengthening livelihoods, and ensuring inclusive growth across the Union Territory.

During the programme, the Chief Minister also laid e-foundation stones and e-inaugurated a series of key development projects in Srinagar district with a total investment exceeding Rs 37 crore.

Ram Janmabhoomi Stalwart Ram Vilas Vedanti Passes Away

LUCKNOW

Dr Ram Vilas Das Vedanti, a prominent figure of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and former Member of Parliament from Ayodhya, passed away while undergoing treatment in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed deep grief, calling his demise an irreparable loss to the spiritual world and Sanatan culture. In a post on X, the Chief Minister described Dr Vedanti as a revered saint of Vashishtha Ashram in Shri Ayodhya Dham and a key pillar of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement.

CM Yogi said his passing marked the end of an era; his life of sacrifice and service to religion, society and the nation would inspire generations. He prayed to Lord Shri Ram to grant peace to the departed soul and strength to his followers.

He consistently advocated the Ram Temple and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav offered prayers in Varanasi, praising its transformation under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav Prays, Praises Varanasi Transformation

VARANASI

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday offered prayers at the revered Kashi Vishwanath and Kal Bhairava temples during his visit to Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. The visit held spiritual as well as political significance, coming just days after the Chief Minister completed two years in office.

After performing rituals at the temples, CM Yadav interacted with the media outside the temple premises and expressed a deep sense of spiritual fulfilment. He said that every visit to Kashi Vishwanath fills him with divine energy and inner peace. Describing Varanasi as a sacred and eternal city, he said it holds a special place in the spiritual consciousness of India.

Whenever I come to Kashi Vishwanath, I feel divine energy. This place is like heaven, Yadav said. Drawing a personal connection, he added that he hails from Ujjain, the city of Lord Mahakal, and therefore understands the profound spiritual importance of Kashi Vishwanath in Sanatan tradition.

The Chief Minister also lauded the transformation of Varanasi under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Banaras has changed tremendously over the past few years. Thanks to Prime Minister Modi, whose leadership has brought new glory to Banaras, Yadav said, referring to the large-scale infrastructure development, improved connectivity, and rejuvenation of religious sites in the city.

CM Yadav shared photographs of his temple visit on social media platform X, stating that he had prayed for the welfare, prosperity, and well-being of all citizens. His post reflected the spiritual tone of the visit, highlighting the role of faith and tradition in public life.

Later in the day, the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister travelled to Jaunpur district, where he visited the residence of Uttar Pradesh Minister Girish Chandra Yadav. There, he paid floral tributes to the minister's late father. Sharing details on X, Mohan Yadav wrote that he prayed to Lord Shri Ram to grant peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family.

Sikkim opens Doklam and Cho La to tourists under regulated conditions

GANGTOK

In a historic move aimed at promoting battlefield tourism and fostering development in border regions, Sikkim on Monday opened two of its most sensitive and historically significant border areas, Doklam and Cho La, to tourists under regulated conditions. The announcement marks a key step in the state's initiative to connect citizens with India's border history while enhancing livelihoods in remote villages.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang said the opening of Doklam and Cho La reflects a broader national vision for border development.

Expressing gratitude to the Government of India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he emphasised that the progress witnessed today is the result of a focused and coordinated effort between the Indian Army, the State Government, and central authorities.

The development we are seeing in border areas is driven by the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Tamang said. Tourism initiatives in these regions will not only attract visitors but also improve living conditions for local communities and support vibrant border villages.

Tourists and bikers will, for the first time, have access to Doklam and Cho La under regulated guidelines.

CM Tamang highlighted that increased tourist movement will create new economic opportunities and contribute to the development of remote settlements near these historic locations.

The Chief Minister also extended his appreciation to Indian Army personnel stationed in the region, acknowledging their dual role in safeguarding borders and supporting development projects that make such initiatives possible.

This initiative has just begun, he said, noting that significant work remains, particularly in infrastructure development. Tamang assured that the State Government will continue improving facilities to support both visitors and officials in these areas.

Two arrested; six company officials summoned

KOLKATA

Police have arrested two people in connection with the incident at the Salt Lake Stadium, officially known as Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, during Lionel Messi's event on Saturday. A senior officer of Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate said on Monday that the two were arrested from the Nagerbazar area by officers of the South Bidhannagar police station. The arrested individuals have been identified as Gaurav Basu and Shubhrapratim Dey.

According to police sources, these two were identified from CCTV footage of the vandalism at the Yuva Bharati Krirangan stadium.

The police have registered an FIR against the arrested individuals under eight specific sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. These sections include charges of obstructing a government official from discharging their duty, intentionally injuring a government official, causing grievous hurt to a government official on duty and creating a nuisance.

Additionally, FIRs have been registered under specific sections of the law for damaging government property and disturbing public peace.

On Saturday, chaos erupted at the Yuva Bharati Krirangan stadium in Salt Lake, surrounding Lionel Messi's visit to Kolkata. Messi, Suarez, and Di Maria did visit the stadium, but they left after only about 22 minutes. During the time Messi and his teammates were at the stadium, they were surrounded by a large crowd, including state Sports Minister Aroop Biswas.

Due to this crowd, the spectators in the stands could barely see Messi. As a result, after Messi and his teammates left the stadium, public anger erupted at the Yuva Bharati Krirangan. The expression of outrage started with tearing down hoardings in the galleries, citing mismanagement. This was followed by a barrage of bottles being thrown from the galleries towards the field.

INDIA-ENERGY-TRANSFORMATION

India's Energy Sector Transformed by Vision and Execution, Says Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI

India has moved decisively towards surplus power generation, seamless grid integration, and global leadership in renewable energy over the last decade, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday. Addressing a briefing, the minister stated that the past 11 years of India's energy sector journey clearly demonstrate how bold vision, honest intent, and relentless execution can fundamentally alter a nation's destiny.

Goyal emphasised that the transformation of India's energy landscape was not accidental but the result of a clear roadmap and consistent policy efforts. He said the country has progressed from an era of power scarcity to power security, and is now steadily advancing towards power sustainability. Expressing confidence in the future, the minister said that as India moves towards the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047, its energy sector will serve as a global case study in managing scale, speed, and sustainability simultaneously.

Highlighting key achievements, Goyal said India recorded its highest-ever coal production of 1,048 million tonnes in the financial year 2024–25. At the same time, coal imports declined by nearly 8 per cent, reflecting improved domestic capacity and reduced dependence on external sources. He noted that coal continues to play an important role in ensuring energy security during the transition to cleaner energy sources.

The minister pointed out that India's renewable energy growth has been particularly remarkable. Solar power capacity has increased 46 times over the last 11 years, making India the third-largest solar power producer in the world. Wind energy capacity has also seen substantial growth, rising from 21 gigawatts in 2014 to 53 gigawatts in 2025. Together, these developments have strengthened India's position as a global leader in renewable energy deployment.

70,598 public grievance cases sorted out in November via Central system

NEW DELHI

As many as 60,450 public grievance cases were received from the states and UTs in November this year, while 70,598 public grievance cases were redressed, leading to a reduction in the total backlog, according to official data released on Monday. Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of disposals in November with 25,184 public grievance (PG) cases, followed by Delhi with 7,989 PG cases.

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) released the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) 40th monthly report for States and UTs for November 2025.

The report states that there has been a significant rise in the disposal of PG cases, rising from 63,305 in October to 70,598 in November.

As of November 30, 2025, the total pendency of PG cases on the CPGRAMS portal stands at 1,65,930 across all states and UTs. Moreover, 23 states/UTs have more than 1,000 pending PG cases each.

According to the report, a total of 57,180 new users were registered on the CPGRAMS portal in November this year, through various channels, out of which 8,739 registrations are from Uttar Pradesh. The Feedback Call Centre collected a total of 70,141 responses in November 2025, where 28,669 responses were collected from states and UTs.

The report also provides the state-wise analysis on the grievances registered through Common Service Centres in November, 2025. CPGRAMS has been integrated with the Common Service Centre (CSC) portal and is available at more than 5 lakh CSCs, associated with 2.5 lakh Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs). A total of 14,094 grievances have been registered through the Common Service Centres in November, 2025.

Besides, the report states that in the last four Financial Years, 984 training courses have been completed under the Sevottam Scheme, under which around 32,939 officers have been trained.

QUICK READ

Far-right candidate Jose Kast wins Chile presidency

Santiago

Far-right candidate Jose Antonio Kast has won a run-off election to become Chile's 38th president, ousting the centre-left government currently in power. With nearly all the ballots counted, Kast prevailed with 58 percent of the vote, defeating former Labour Minister Jeannette Jara, a Communist Party politician who represented the governing centre-left coalition. Jara and her coalition, Unity for Chile, conceded defeat shortly after the polls closed in the South American country. Democracy has spoken loud and clear. I have just spoken with President-elect [Kast] to wish him success for the good of Chile, Jara wrote on social media.

Dhaka student-turned-politician injured, sent to Singapore

Dhaka

Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson of Inqilab Mancha, a radical platform in Bangladesh, who was shot in Dhaka's Bijoynagar area and remains in a critical condition, is being flown to Singapore on Monday for advanced medical treatment. He was taken out of Evercare Hospital in Dhaka on Monday afternoon after an air ambulance landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International in Dhaka. The medical board overseeing the treatment at Evercare Hospital described his condition as critical, citing severe brain damage despite surgery.

India and Fiji discuss bilateral ties, issues of mutual interest

Suva

India's High Commissioner to Fiji, Suneet Mehta called on Fiji's Minister for Immigration Viliame B Naupoto on Monday, discussing matters of mutual interest, including on skilled mobility, people-to-people ties and further strengthening of bilateral ties. In a statement on X, Indian High Commission in Fiji stated, Veilomani Dosti. High Commissioner Suneet Mehta paid a courtesy call on the Hon. Viliame B. Naupoto, Minister for Immigration, today. Productive discussions were held on matters of mutual interest, including on skilled mobility, people-to-people links and further strengthening of relations between India and Fiji.

Flash floods in Morocco's Safi Province kill 37 after rains

Torrential rains unleashed deadly flash floods in Morocco's Safi province, killing dozens, flooding homes, disrupting transport and schools

SAFI

At least 37 people have been killed in devastating flash floods triggered by torrential rainfall in Morocco's Atlantic coastal province of Safi, according to local authorities. The sudden deluge struck overwhelming drainage systems and sending torrents of muddy water through residential neighbourhoods and commercial areas, leaving widespread destruction in its wake.

State-owned broadcaster quoting provincial officials, reported on Monday that at least 14 injured people were taken to hospitals for treatment, including two who remain in intensive care. The injured sustained trauma as floodwaters surged through streets with little warning, sweeping away vehicles, rubbish bins and other debris. Social media footage circulating widely showed powerful currents rushing through Safi's streets, highlighting the speed and force with which the disaster unfolded.

Safi, located about 300 kilometres south of the capital Rabat, was particularly hard-hit in its historic old city. Authorities said that at least 70 homes and businesses were flooded after just one hour of intense rainfall, underscoring the severity of the downpour. Many residents were caught off guard, with little time to protect their belongings or evacuate to safer areas. In an official statement, the Safi governorate confirmed that search and rescue operations were ongoing. Emergency teams have been deployed to affected neighbourhoods, while necessary measures have been taken to secure dangerous areas and provide immediate assistance to displaced residents. Temporary shelters and relief support are being arranged as officials assess the full extent of the damage. However, frustration has surfaced among residents. Marouane Tamer, a local resident quoted, questioned why government trucks were not dispatched sooner to pump out floodwater from heavily affected areas. Such concerns have added to calls for improved emergency preparedness and urban flood management.

Israel, Hamas Trade Blame Over Gaza Peace Delays

Israel and Hamas exchanged accusations over delays to Gaza ceasefire talks after a senior commander was killed there.

BEIT LAHIA

Israel and Hamas have accused each other of obstructing progress toward the second phase of a United States-brokered peace plan for Gaza, heightening tensions despite an ongoing ceasefire. The exchange of accusations came on Monday, a day after the killing of a senior Hamas military commander near Gaza City, an incident that has further strained already fragile negotiations.

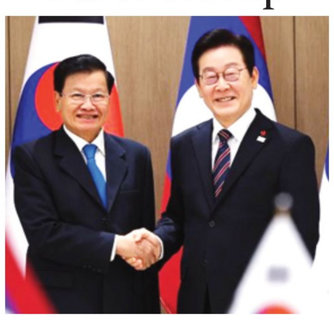
In a video statement released, Hamas's Gaza chief Khalil al-Hayya confirmed that Raed Saad, a senior Hamas commander, was killed in an Israeli attack the previous day. Al-Hayya accused Israel of violating the ceasefire agreement and undermining the broader peace framework brokered by the United States. He warned that continued military actions and targeted assassinations could threaten the viability of the agreement.

The continued Israeli violations of the ceasefire agreement and the latest assassinations that targeted Saad and others threaten the viability of the agreement, al-Hayya said. He urged mediators, particularly US President Donald Trump, to pressure Israel to respect and fully adhere to the ceasefire terms.

Israel, however, rejected Hamas's accusations and countered that Palestinian armed groups were delaying the process by refusing to hand over the remains of the last captive covered under the first phase of the agreement. Israeli officials also alleged that Hamas and allied groups were attempting to remilitarise during the truce, a claim Hamas has repeatedly denied.

The current ceasefire, which began on October 10, marked the first phase of the truce agreed upon in October. Phase one called for a halt to hostilities, the release of living captives and prisoners, the return of the remains of those killed, and the facilitation of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Only after the full implementation of these commitments was phase two expected to begin.

South Korea, Laos Upgrade Ties to Partnership



SEOUL

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and Laotian President Thongloun Sisoulith on Monday agreed to upgrade bilateral relations to a comprehensive partnership during summit talks marking the 30th anniversary of renewed diplomatic ties. Lee described Laos as a key partner in South Korea's development cooperation, investment and engagement with ASEAN and Mekong River nations.

Lee said the two sides would expand cooperation into new areas such as critical mineral supply chains and infrastructure development, as Laos aims to become a regional transportation and logistics hub despite being landlocked. "The Republic of Korea will stand alongside Laos as a reliable partner throughout this process," he said.

Thongloun noted that Laos remains one of the world's least developed countries and expressed hope for continued South Korean support to strengthen its economy.

The leaders also discussed joint efforts to combat transnational crimes, including online scams, and plan to sign mutual legal assistance and extradition treaties.

Sebastien Lai urged Britain to demand his father Jimmy Lai's release after Hong Kong court convictions

Jimmy Lai's Son Urges Britain to Tie China Relations to Release of Jailed Pro-Democracy Activist

LONDON

Sebastien Lai, the son of imprisoned Hong Kong pro-democracy campaigner Jimmy Lai, has called on the British government to make his father's release a firm precondition for closer diplomatic and economic relations with China. His appeal came after Hong Kong's High Court on Monday found the 78-year-old media tycoon guilty of sedition and collusion under the China-imposed national security law.

Speaking at a press conference in London, Sebastien Lai said the time had come for the United Kingdom to translate its expressions of concern into concrete action. It's time to put action behind words and make my father's release a precondition to closer relationships with China, he said, urging British leaders to take a tougher stance in response to what he described as a grave injustice.

Jimmy Lai, the founder of the now-defunct and a prominent critic of Beijing, holds British citizenship. Following the verdict, he now faces the possibility of life imprisonment, one of the harshest penalties available under the sweeping national security law imposed by China in 2020 after months of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

Sebastien Lai said he was heartbroken by his father's deteriorating health, noting that prolonged detention and repeated court proceedings had taken a severe toll. Human rights groups and international observers have previously raised concerns about Jimmy Lai's physical condition, warning that continued incarceration could pose serious risks given his age.

Criticising the legal framework used against his father, Sebastien argued that the national security law had been weaponised to silence dissent. He said Jimmy Lai was being punished for exercising basic freedoms, adding that his father was targeted simply because he essentially said stuff that they didn't like. Supporters of Lai have long maintained that the charges against him are politically motivated and aimed at crushing independent journalism and opposition voices in Hong Kong.

Indian envoy, Japan's House of Representatives Speaker discuss bilateral ties

TOKYO

India's Ambassador-designate to Japan, Nagma Mohamed Mallick held a meeting with the Speaker of Japan's House of Representatives Fukushiro Nukaga on Monday, discussing various aspects of bilateral ties. Ambassador-designate Ms. Nagma Mohamed Mallick called on H. E. Mr. Fukushiro Nukaga, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Japan, and discussed various aspects of the India-Japan relationship, the Indian Embassy in Japan posted on X.

On December 12, Mallick met Special Advisor to Japanese PM, Uno Yoshimasa, and discussed opportunities for bilateral collaboration. Ambassador-designate H.E. Ms. Nagma M. Mallick met, Special Advisor to Prime Minister of Japan H.E. Uno Yoshimasa, and discussed opportunities for India-Japan collaboration, the Indian Embassy in Japan stated on X.

Earlier, she also held discussions with Yamaguchi Governor Tsugimasa Muraoka and Yamaguchi Prefectural Assembly Speaker Shungaku Yanai on strengthening bilateral ties with a focus on Yamaguchi Prefecture. Ambassador Nagma Mohamad Mallick met Governor of Yamaguchi H.E Mr Tsugimasa Muraoka and Speaker of Yamaguchi Prefectural Assembly H.E Mr Shungaku Yanai. Also present at the meeting were Honourable members of Prefectural Assembly Mr Kenji Niki , Mr Kenjiro Nishimoto and Mr Shinji Sakamoto who are office bearers of the India-ASEAN regional Friendship and Economic Exchange Promotion League. They discussed on ways to strengthen India- Japan ties especially with focus on Yamaguchi Prefecture, the Indian Embassy in Japan posted on X after the meeting.

The Indian Embassy, along with the Yamaguchi prefecture, also organised a business seminar in Yamaguchi to enlighten the participants on India's robust growth trajectory and opportunities for synergy between India and Yamaguchi. In her opening remarks, Mallick spoke about areas of complementarity between Yamaguchi and India, while Governor Muroka highlighted the steps taken by the Embassy to organise this outreach event, it added.

Afghan returnees call for Taliban's support as winter approaches

KABUL

Refugees, who have recently returned to Afghanistan and are now residing in designated camps, have urged the Taliban to provide them shelter, employment opportunities and access to necessary supplies as the winter season is approaching. We ask the Islamic Emirate to pay attention to our situation. We are sick and cannot work in this cold. We need help, one Afghan returnee, Aynuddin, as saying.

Khan Mohammad and Mohammad Awaz, who have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan after 40 years, have expressed hope that the Taliban will help them get through the winter and added, After that, we will try to rebuild our lives. Mohammad Awaz said, I have ten children, and I'm worried they'll fall ill this winter. We ask the Islamic Emirate to provide us with facilities. Analysts have stated that the government and aid organisations should continue supporting the Afghan refugees who recently returned to their homes. The appeal from returnees and analysts comes as Afghan refugees have been forcibly deported from neighbouring nations in recent years. The Taliban has repeatedly promised that it will provide assistance to Afghan refugees and urged host nations to stop forced deportations.

A Taliban official said that more than 4,500 Afghan refugees were forcibly repatriated from Pakistan and Iran in a single day. Sharing a report from the High Commission for Addressing Migrants' Issues on X, Taliban deputy spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat stated that 913 families, comprising 4,991 individuals, returned to Afghanistan. As per the report, the returnees entered Afghanistan through Spin Boldak in Kandahar, Bahramcha in Helmand, Torkham crossing in Nangarhar, Islam Qala crossing in Herat, and Pul-i-Abresham in Nimroz.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

1		2		3	7			9
8	6				4	7		3
	5		8		9			4
	3		4			6	1	
	2		9				4	
5		4			1	3		8
	8		2		6	9		1
	1		3		5		8	
		6	7				3	

7	6	1	9	8	4	3	5	2
9	5	8	3	1	2	4	6	7
2	4	3	5	6	7	9	1	8
3	1	7	6	4	5	2	8	9
5	9	6	8	2	3	1	7	4
4	8	2	1	7	9	6	3	5
6	7	9	2	5	1	8	4	3
1	2	5	4	3	8	7	9	6
8	3	4	7	9	6	5	2	1

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

RUSSIAN ASSETS DISPUTE

EU talks on using Russian assets for Ukraine face hurdles

BRUSSELS

Discussions within the European Union on financing Ukraine's ongoing support, including a plan to leverage frozen Russian state assets, are becoming "increasingly difficult," an EU official said on Monday. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas made the remarks ahead of the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Brussels, noting that EU leaders are set to meet Thursday and Friday for the bloc's final summit of the year.

Several funding options are under consideration, but the "most credible" is a so-called "reparations loan" backed by frozen Russian assets. Western countries have frozen roughly $300 billion in Russian sovereign assets since the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in February 2022, with the EU immobilizing about €210 billion ($246.4 billion), mostly held at Belgium-based Euroclear. Earlier this month, EU governments agreed to indefinitely immobilize these assets to prevent any single member state from blocking the measure.

However, Belgium has raised legal and financial liability concerns over the proposed loan, complicating earlier efforts to finalize the deal. Meanwhile, Russia has strongly criticized the EU's plan. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova called the bloc an "illegitimate institution and a gang that legitimizes utterly criminal ideas," warning that attempts to seize Russian assets could trigger "harsh retaliatory measures," including both statements and practical actions.

Kallas stressed that the EU remains committed to reaching a funding decision at the upcoming summit, emphasizing the need to stabilize support for Ukraine into 2026 and 2027. Negotiations, however, remain tense amid legal, financial, and diplomatic obstacles.

QUICK READ

Indian Businesses Rush Data Modernisation For AI

New Delhi

A recent report reveals that 89 per cent of Indian business leaders believe modernising data strategies is essential for AI success. Salesforce's study found 75 per cent of companies struggle with incomplete or poor-quality data, slowing AI progress. Firms are increasingly adopting zero copy integration to access multiple databases without moving or reformatting data. Such methods boost connected customer data and AI outcomes. Yet, 94 per cent of leaders reported AI errors due to bad data. Experts stress treating data as a strategic asset, unified, governed, and context-rich, to truly unlock AI's potential.

Wakefit Shares Drop Nine Percent After Debut

Mumbai

Shares of home brand Wakefit Innovations fell up to 9 per cent after a muted stock market debut on Monday. Its Rs 1,289-crore IPO saw moderate investor interest. The stock listed at Rs 195 on NSE, matching the issue price, and opened at Rs 194.10 on BSE. Wakefit's IPO was subscribed 2.52 times overall, with strong retail participation. Grey market trends had suggested small gains, but actual listing disappointed. The company raised Rs 580 crore from anchor investors and plans to use funds to open new stores, buy equipment, and boost marketing and operations.

Centre Releases Major Funds For Kerala Panchayats

Rural local bodies can use funds for area-specific needs under the Eleventh Schedule, excluding salaries and establishment expenses

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday released over Rs 260.20 crore to rural local bodies in Kerala under the 15th Finance Commission grants for the financial year 2025-26.

This amount is the first instalment of untied grants meant to support development activities across all 14 district panchayats, 152 block panchayats, and 9,414 gram panchayats in the state, according to an official statement.

The funds can be used by rural local bodies to meet area-specific needs listed under the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution, excluding salaries and other establishment expenses.

These grants help panchayats plan and carry out local projects based on the priorities of their communities.

In contrast, tied grants are provided for essential services such as sanitation, waste management, drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting, water recycling, and maintaining open defecation-free status in villages.

The Centre had earlier released Rs 717.17 crore to Maharashtra for rural local bodies under the same Finance Commission grants for 2025-26. These funds covered elected district, block, and gram panchayats across the state to improve local governance.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Jal Shakti jointly recommend the release of these grants, which are approved and issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The grants are released in two instalments every financial year to ensure timely development work at the grassroots level.

Earlier this year, the Centre also released over Rs 223 crore for Assam and Rs 444.38 crore for Odisha to strengthen rural panchayat institutions under the same scheme.

These releases highlight the government's focus on empowering villages, improving services, and supporting decentralised planning through steady financial support for grassroots institutions nationwide today consistently.

ED Questions Rana Kapoor In Ambani Case

Yes Bank's exposure to Reliance Home Finance was Rs 1,353.5 crore and Reliance Commercial Finance Rs 1,984 crore, rising to nearly Rs 13,000 crore by 2018

MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday questioned Yes Bank co-founder Rana Kapoor in connection with a money laundering investigation linked to companies of the Reliance Anil Ambani Group.

Officials said Kapoor's statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act as part of an ongoing probe into financial dealings between Yes Bank and group companies during the period from 2017 to 2019.

According to investigators, Yes Bank had invested nearly Rs 2,965 crore in Reliance Home Finance Limited and about Rs 2,045 crore in Reliance Commercial Finance Limited during those years. By December 2019, these investments reportedly turned into non-performing assets, raising serious concerns.

Sources said the outstanding exposure stood at Rs 1,353.5 crore in Reliance Home Finance and Rs 1,984 crore in Reliance Commercial Finance. During Rana Kapoor's tenure, Yes Bank's total exposure to the Anil Ambani Group was around Rs 6,000 crore in March 2017 and later rose sharply to nearly Rs 13,000 crore by March 2018.

Investigators further stated that more than Rs 5,000 crore was invested by the bank into the two finance companies, both part of the Anil Ambani Group. Together, the firms are believed to have received public funds worth over Rs 11,000 crore.

The ED is also examining the flow of money before these investments were made. Sources said Yes Bank had received large funds from the former Reliance Nippon Mutual Fund.

Under market rules, the mutual fund was not permitted to invest directly in Anil Ambani group companies due to conflict of interest rules. The agency suspects the funds were routed indirectly using Yes Bank as a channel.

The investigation is continuing, and further action will depend on the findings.

India Could Sell 22 Million EVs By 2035

NEW DELHI

A new report predicts India's electric vehicle (EV) sales could reach 22 million units by 2035, with over half of vehicles in most segments being electric. KPMG India said growth depends on strong demand, resilient supply chains, and supportive policies. Critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel are essential, but most global refining capacity is concentrated abroad, posing risks. The report suggests domestic mining, processing, and recycling, plus long-term supply contracts, to secure resources. Experts stressed India must act now to build a robust EV ecosystem and position itself as a global leader in sustainable mobility.

The ministry attributed negative inflation mainly to falling prices of food, fuel, metals, and electricity, controlling wholesale rates

Wholesale Inflation Remains Negative In November

NEW DELHI

India's wholesale price inflation continued to stay in the negative zone in November, offering relief to businesses and consumers, according to data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Monday.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation stood at minus 0.32 percent in November compared to the same month last year. This followed a sharper contraction of minus 1.21 percent in October. In contrast, WPI inflation was at 2.16 percent in November last year.

The ministry said the negative inflation rate was mainly due to lower prices of food articles, mineral oils, crude petroleum, natural gas, basic metals and electricity. The steady fall in these key items helped keep overall wholesale prices under control.

Meanwhile, consumer inflation also remained low. Inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was estimated at 0.71 percent in November, slightly higher than the 0.25 percent recorded in October, as per data released earlier by the Ministry of Statistics.

Food inflation stayed firmly in the negative zone at minus 3.91 percent in November. This marked the sixth consecutive month of falling food prices, easing pressure on household budgets and daily expenses.

The overall inflation outlook remains benign. The Reserve Bank of India has reduced its inflation forecast for the financial year 2025-26 to 2 percent from the earlier estimate of 2.6 percent, helped by falling food prices and the impact of GST rate cuts.

Reflecting the easing inflation, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra recently announced a 25 basis point cut in the repo rate to 5.25 percent to support economic growth.

Malhotra said strong economic growth and soft inflation have created a favourable period for the Indian economy. He added that core inflation remains under control, food supply conditions have improved, and global commodity prices are expected to soften, supporting price stability going ahead.

Children Mutual Funds See Strong Growth Surge

NEW DELHI

Children's mutual funds in India have seen strong growth over the past five years as parents seek better ways to plan for education and future needs.

A recent ICRA Analytics report said the category expanded by around 21 percent during this period and is expected to maintain double-digit growth ahead. Rising education costs, increasing by nearly 11–12 percent annually, along with better returns from market-linked investments, have driven demand. Assets under management rose sharply to Rs 25,675 crore in November 2025 from Rs 9,866 crore five years ago, reflecting growing investor confidence.

Investor folios also increased to about 32 lakh from nearly 29 lakh. Currently, twelve children's mutual fund schemes are available, with top performers delivering 15–20 percent annual returns over the past three to five years.

Indian Investors Expand Reach To Global Markets

MUMBAI

Investors from more than 145 cities across India are now participating in global markets, with 47 percent coming from tier 2 and tier 3 locations, a report by Vested Finance revealed on Monday.

The report highlighted a shift in Indian investor behaviour, showing that many are moving beyond single-stock bets to invest in US equities, index and thematic ETFs, private market opportunities, and global funds, including those domiciled in GIFT City. This indicates a more structured approach to portfolio building and growing comfort with global market participation.

"Global investing for Indians has moved from curiosity to conviction. Investors are increasingly thinking in terms of asset allocation, diversification, and long-term exposure, rather than one-off investments," said Viram Shah, Founder and CEO of Vested Finance.

The report also noted a two-way investment trend, with Indian investors using international platforms to access overseas markets and also invest back into India, reflecting a growing global capital perspective.

According to the findings, 48 percent of global investors are under 35, and 38 percent start with less than $500. While 68 percent prefer investing in individual stocks, 24 percent choose ETFs, seven percent invest in cash, and one percent in global funds. On average, investors hold eight stocks, with popular choices including Nvidia, Tesla, Apple, Meta Platforms, Alphabet, and Microsoft.

The rise in global investing has been supported by better access to research, digital tools, and financial education, especially outside metro cities. About 38 percent of investors increase their global allocation within the first year, while 61 percent diversify across both stocks and ETFs.

The report underscores a growing sophistication among Indian investors, signalling that global investment is becoming an integral part of long-term wealth creation strategies nationwide.

India Set To Lead Asia-Pacific Economic Growth

NEW DELHI

India is projected to be the fastest-growing major economy in the Asia-Pacific region in 2026, with GDP expected to expand by 6.6 percent and inflation estimated at 4.2 percent, according to a report by the Mastercard Economics Institute (MEI) released on Monday.

The report attributes the outlook to strong domestic demand, monetary easing, tax reforms, GST rationalisation, and easing global commodity prices. Favourable demographics, rapid digital adoption, and technological progress are further strengthening India's growth momentum, driving expansion in global capability centres and Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

Tourism is emerging as a key contributor, supporting local economies and external stability, with destinations such as Goa, Rishikesh, and Amritsar attracting experiential travellers.

India is also accelerating AI adoption, scoring 8 on the AI Enthusiasm Index. MEI expects global GDP growth to moderate slightly to 3.1 percent in 2026, while India remains a key regional growth driver.

Gold, Silver Prices Surge On MCX Trading

MUMBAI

Gold and silver prices rose sharply on Monday, driven by a weaker US dollar and positive global cues, according to early trading on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).

Gold February futures gained 0.72 percent to trade at Rs 1,34,580 per 10 grams, while silver March contracts climbed 1.36 percent to Rs 1,95,466 per kilogram, showing strong buying interest from investors.

The precious metals had already seen sharp movements in the previous session. On Friday, December 12, MCX gold February futures surged nearly Rs 2,800, or over 2 percent, to a record high of Rs 1,35,263 per 10 grams. However, profit booking later pulled gold down to close at Rs 1,33,551 per 10 grams, up 0.82 percent.

Silver also touched an all-time high in the last session, rising Rs 2,700, or 1.3 percent, to Rs 2,01,615 per kilogram. Heavy profit booking later led silver to settle 3.33 percent lower at Rs 1,92,318 per kilogram.

Market analysts said the gains on Monday were supported by a weaker US dollar, which fell 0.10 percent, and a drop in the 10-year US Treasury yield to 4.18 percent. Lower bond yields and a soft dollar make non-yielding assets like gold and silver more attractive to investors.

Bullion prices have been on an upward trend following the US Federal Reserve's 25-basis-point rate cut on December 10, with expectations of further rate reductions fueling demand. Additional factors such as strong central bank buying, inflows into gold and silver ETFs, geopolitical tensions, and global economic uncertainties related to US tariffs have also helped push prices higher.

The combination of these factors suggests continued investor interest in gold and silver as safe-haven assets amid global market volatility.

10YEAR YIELD OUTLOOK

Government Bond Yields Likely To Ease Ahead

NEW DELHI

Government bond yields in India are expected to move slightly lower in the coming months as inflation cools, fiscal conditions improve, and crude oil prices soften, according to a report released on Monday.

Crisil Intelligence said the benchmark 10-year government bond yield is likely to trade in the range of 6.38 to 6.48 percent by February 28, 2026. The yield is currently hovering around 6.54 percent, indicating limited but steady downward movement.

The report also noted that yields on state development loans may decline from the present level of around 7.15 percent to a range of 6.98 to 7.08 percent by the end of February. Similarly, 10-year corporate bond yields are expected to fall into the same range, supported by stable economic conditions.

Crisil said the Reserve Bank of India still has room for a rate cut due to benign inflation, but it is likely to follow a data-driven approach amid global uncertainties. Domestic demand is expected to remain the main driver of growth, helped by lower inflation, GST rationalisation, and income tax relief measures.

The agency forecast India's GDP growth at 7 percent in the current fiscal year, higher than 6.5 percent recorded in the previous year. Consumer price inflation is expected to soften further to around 2.5 percent in FY26.

Food inflation is likely to remain under control due to a sharper-than-expected fall in prices, strong agricultural output, moderate global crude prices, and the benefits of GST rate cuts.

On the fiscal front, the Union Budget aims to reduce the Centre's fiscal deficit to 4.4 percent of GDP in FY26 from 4.8 percent in FY25, strengthening investor confidence.

Crisil expects crude oil prices to average between $60 and $65 per barrel in 2026. However, bond yields may still be influenced by factors such as global developments, foreign investor flows, currency movements, and government borrowing plans in the near term.

CROWDS THAT KILL

WHY STAMPEDES KEEP HAUNTING INDIA'S PUBLIC LIFE

When faith, festivals, fear, and failure collide, the deadliest force is not the crowd — it is the system around it.

On a humid evening, thousands gather outside a temple, railway station, stadium, or political rally. The air is thick with anticipation — devotion, desperation, excitement, or urgency. A rumor spreads. A gate closes. A step slips. Someone falls. And within seconds, human bodies turn into a force of destruction. People are trampled not because they are careless, but because they are powerless.

India has witnessed dozens of deadly stampedes over the decades. From religious congregations to railway platforms, from election rallies to pilgrimage routes, stampedes recur with horrifying regularity. Each time, condolences are offered. Compensation is announced. Committees are formed. And then, quietly, the nation moves on — until the next crowd surges, and the next set of lives are crushed.

Stampedes in India are not accidents. They are structural failures waiting to happen.

Understanding Stampedes: More Than Crowd Panic

A stampede is often described as a sudden rush of people leading to injuries and deaths due to trampling or suffocation. But this definition hides more than it reveals. Most stampede deaths do not occur because people are running wildly. They occur due to crowd compression when people are packed so tightly that they cannot breathe. Victims often die standing up, their chests unable to expand. Medical studies show that compressive asphyxia, not trampling, is the primary cause of death in dense crowds. In simple terms: people die not because they panic, but because they have no space to exist. This distinction matters. Because if panic were the root cause, blame would lie with individuals. But if compression is the cause, responsibility shifts to planning, design, and governance.

A Grim Pattern Across Decades

India's history of stampedes spans generations.

- In 1954, over 800 people died during the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad.
- In 2005, 265 pilgrims were killed at the Mandhardevi temple in Maharashtra after a fire triggered chaos.
- In 2008, 250 people died at the Naina Devi temple in Himachal Pradesh following rumors of a landslide.
- In 2013, 36 people died near the Ratangarh temple in Madhya Pradesh due to crowd congestion on a bridge.
- In 2015, over 27 people were killed at a temple in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, after a wall collapse.
- In 2022, stampede-like crowd pressure caused deaths during religious events and public celebrations across states.

These tragedies cut across geography, religion, and politics. Temples, mosques, ghats, stations, stadiums the venue changes, but the outcome remains eerily similar.

This repetition exposes a deeper truth: India has normalized deadly crowds.

The First Major Cause: Overcrowding Without Capacity Planning

India's population density is among the highest in the world, but population alone does not cause stampedes. Poor planning does.

Most venues hosting large gatherings in India lack scientifically calculated capacity limits. Pilgrimage sites often operate on centuries-old layouts never designed for modern crowd volumes. Railway stations built decades ago now handle several times their intended load. Temporary structures at festivals are erected without stress-testing for human flow.

Yet, in many Indian events, there is no real-time monitoring of crowd density. People keep entering even when safe limits are crossed.

When density exceeds 5–6 people per square meter, movement becomes impossible. At 7–8 people per square meter, death becomes likely.

India frequently crosses this threshold knowingly.

Crowd capacity is not just about how many people fit into a space. It depends on

- Entry and exit width
- Flow speed
- Bottlenecks and choke points
- Emergency evacuation routes
- Crowd behavior patterns

The Second Major Cause: Poor Crowd Flow Design

Crowds are not random. They behave like fluids. They slow down at turns, thicken at slopes, and compress near narrow exits. Yet crowd flow design is often ignored in India.

Religious processions often force devotees to walk long distances through constrained corridors, increasing fatigue and instability. In such conditions, a single fall can trigger a domino effect.

The tragedy is not that people fall. The tragedy is that there is no margin for recovery when they do.

Common failures include

- Single entry and exit points for massive gatherings
- Opposing flows of people on narrow paths
- Sharp turns near staircases or bridges
- Temporary barricades placed without simulation
- Sudden route diversions without communication

The Third Major Cause: Administrative Negligence and Reactive Policing

After every stampede, officials cite uncontrollable crowds or unexpected surges. But large gatherings in India are rarely unexpected.

Pilgrimages happen on fixed dates. Festivals are annual. Political rallies are scheduled. Election roadshows are planned weeks in advance.

What remains missing is proactive administration.

Policing often focuses on law and order rather than crowd safety. Barricades are used to control people, not protect them. Personnel are deployed for VIP movement, not emergency response.

When response is delayed, deaths multiply.

In many stampede cases

- Emergency exits were blocked
- Ambulances arrived late
- On-ground staff lacked training in crowd psychology
- Confusion reigned over who was in charge
- When authority is fragmented, response is delayed.

The Fifth Major Cause: Cultural Fatalism and Public Conditioning

Perhaps the most uncomfortable reason behind recurring stampedes lies within society itself.

There is a deeply ingrained belief that suffering in crowds is inevitable. That danger is part of devotion. That hardship proves faith. That deaths are unfortunate but unavoidable.

This fatalism weakens public demand for accountability.

Crowd safety is rarely a voting issue. No official has ever lost an election solely due to stampede deaths. Compensation is seen as closure. Structural reform is postponed.

As long as crowds are treated as expendable and lives as statistics, the cycle continues.

The Fourth Major Cause: Communication Failure and Rumors

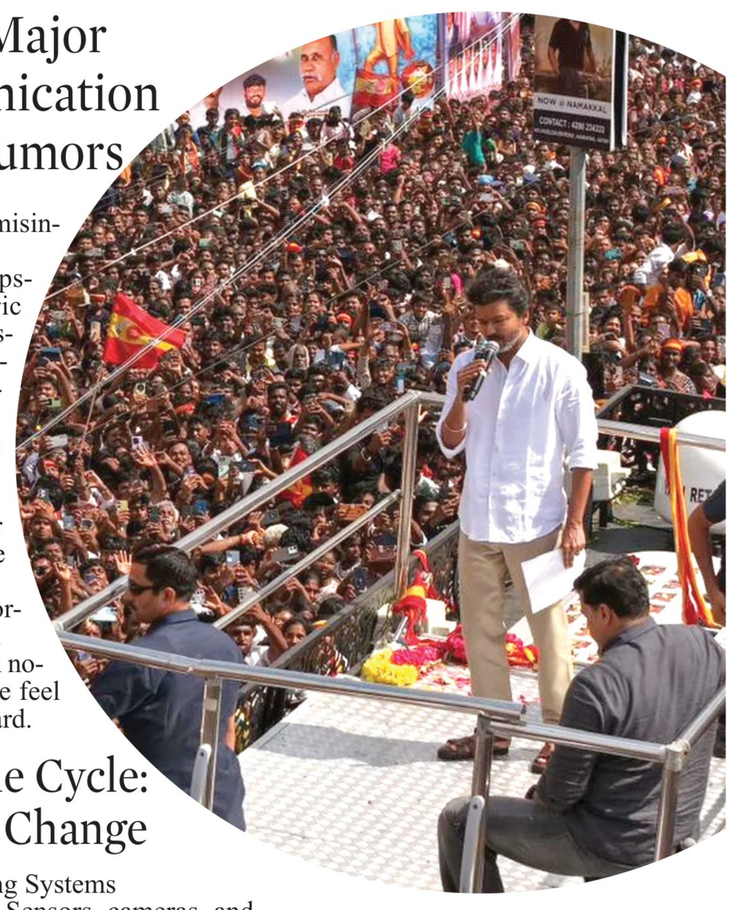
Stampedes often begin with misinformation.

A rumor of a bridge collapsing. A shout about an electric wire. A cry that a gate is closing. A false alarm spreads faster than any official announcement.

India's crowd environments are acoustically chaotic. Loudspeakers are often inaudible. Instructions are unclear or contradictory. Language barriers worsen confusion.

In the absence of clear information, fear fills the vacuum.

Panic does not emerge from nowhere. It is born when people feel trapped, uncertain, and unheard.



The Sixth Major Cause: Absence of Accountability

One of the most striking features of stampede disasters in India is the lack of consequences.

Investigations are ordered. Reports are filed. Blame is diffused across departments. And then silence.

Without accountability, there is no incentive to change.

Tragedies become rituals. Deaths become footnotes.

Rarely do we see

- Criminal liability for gross negligence
- Long-term institutional reform
- Mandatory safety audits after incidents
- Public release of inquiry findings

How Other Countries Handle Crowds Differently

Stampedes are not unique to India. But their frequency and scale are.

Countries hosting large religious or sporting events invest heavily in crowd science. The Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia, once infamous for deadly stampedes, has dramatically reduced casualties through:

India has the technological capability to do the same. What it lacks is the political will to prioritize invisible safety over visible spectacle.

- Real-time crowd density monitoring
- Staggered entry schedules
- One-way movement systems
- Advanced simulation models
- Strict enforcement of capacity limits

The Human Cost Beyond Numbers

Every stampede headline hides hundreds of untold stories.

A mother searching for her child's slipper.

An elderly man suffocating inches from open air.

A family traveling overnight for a moment of faith that ends in grief.

Stampedes disproportionately kill the poor, the elderly, women, and children — those with the least physical strength to resist crowd pressure.

These are not reckless thrill-seekers. They are ordinary citizens trusting the system to keep them safe.

That trust is repeatedly betrayed.

Breaking the Cycle: What Must Change

Preventing stampedes is not impossible. It requires a shift in mindset.

1. Crowd Safety as Infrastructure

Crowd management must be treated as critical infrastructure, not event logistics.

2. Mandatory Capacity Audits

Every venue hosting large gatherings must have legally enforced capacity limits.

3. Professional Crowd Managers

Crowd science experts, not just police, must plan and supervise events.

4. Real-Time Monitoring Systems

Sensors, cameras, and AI-based density alerts should guide entry control.

5. Clear Communication Protocols

Unified messaging systems with multilingual announcements are essential.

6. Legal Accountability

Gross negligence causing stampedes must attract criminal liability.

7. Public Awareness

Citizens must be educated to recognize danger signs and demand safer systems.

The Crowd Is Not the Enemy

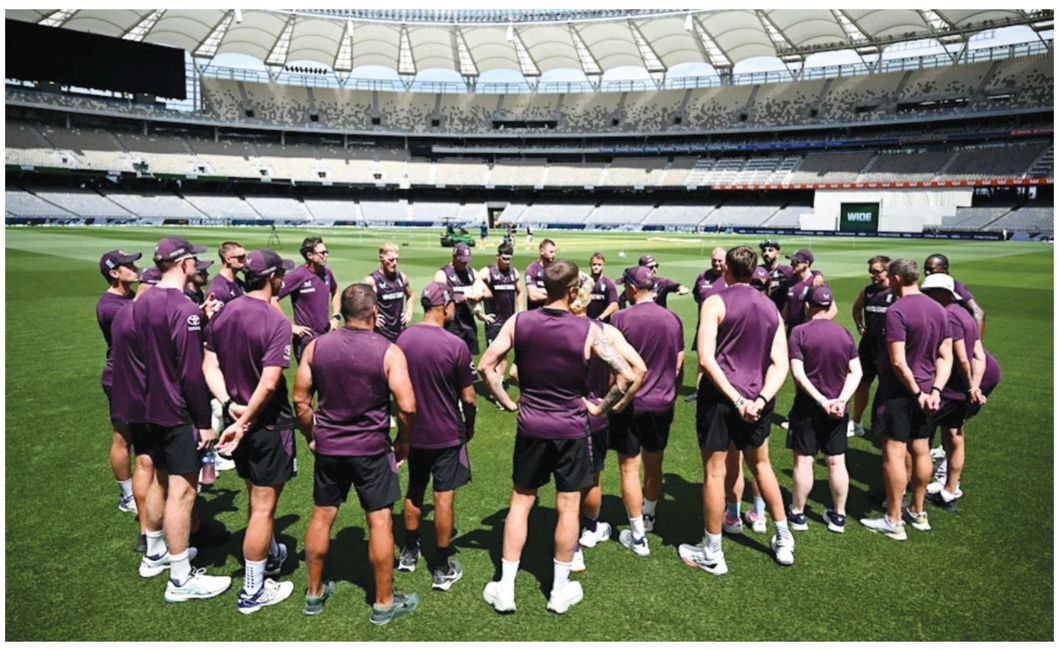
India's stampede problem is not a people problem. It is a governance problem. Crowds do not kill. Poor planning does. Faith does not kill. Negligence does. Celebration does not kill. Indifference does.

As India grows, urbanizes, and gathers in ever larger numbers, the question is no longer whether stampedes will happen again but whether we will continue to accept them as fate. Every stampede is a warning written in human lives. Ignoring it is a choice. And one that costs far too much.

Desperate England Chase Ashes Miracle as Adelaide Test Looms

England face daunting odds, hoping Adelaide revival can rescue Ashes pride

ADELAIDE



England head into Wednesday's third Ashes Test in Adelaide clinging to faint hopes of a dramatic turnaround, with Australia firmly in control and eyeing an early series seal. Heavy defeats in Perth and Brisbane have left the tourists 2-0 down and staring at another bruising campaign Down Under.

The statistics make grim reading. England have now gone 17 Tests without a win in Australia, their last success dating back to the 2010–11 series. Another defeat would mean the Ashes are decided inside three Tests for the fourth consecutive Australian series. Former England opener Geoffrey Boycott has been scathing, criticising "irresponsible batting" and lapses in the field. "After just six days of Ashes cricket, England somehow need a miracle," he wrote.

Yet coach Brendon McCullum remains defiant. "We're a massive chance in this Test match. Do that, and the narrative changes," he insisted. Captain Ben Stokes, meanwhile, admitted his side have faltered under pressure and demanded greater resilience.

England may freshen up their bowling attack, with Mark Wood injured and Josh Tongue in contention. The top seven are expected to remain unchanged, with Ollie Pope retaining his place at number three. Spin could also come into play, with Shoaib Bashir and Will Jacks vying for a spot.

Australia, brimming with confidence, are boosted by the return of skipper Pat Cummins, who is set to lead an already potent attack featuring Mitchell Starc, the series' leading wicket-taker. Nathan Lyon is also expected to return. Despite the momentum, Australian greats have urged caution. Adelaide Oval's flatter pitch and shorter boundaries may offer England their best chance to unleash their aggressive style. As both camps acknowledge, if an Ashes surprise is to happen, Adelaide is where it must begin.

Have Faith in Shubman, He'll Win World T20 Games: Abhishek

DHARAMSALA

Having shared dressing rooms and dreams since their early teens, Abhishek Sharma has thrown his weight firmly behind close friend Shubman Gill, insisting the vice-captain will soon start winning T20I matches for India, including at the World T20 next year.

Gill's place in the Indian T20I XI has come under scrutiny following a modest run of form. The right-hander has scored 291 runs in 15 innings at a strike-rate of 137.3, with just four sixes, while a settled Sanju Samson has often found himself sidelined. In the third T20I against South Africa here on Sunday, Gill made a run-a-ball 28 in a chase of 118, after Abhishek's explosive 35 off 18 balls set the tone.

Asked about Gill and skipper Suryakumar Yadav enduring a lean patch in the ongoing five-match series, Abhishek was unequivocal. "Trust me, these two guys are going to win matches in the World Cup and in this series as well," he said, with India currently leading 2-1.

On Gill, Abhishek was especially protective. "I've been playing with Shubman for so long. I know which match he can win, in which conditions, irrespective of the opposition," he said. "I have a lot of faith in him, and I hope everyone will have faith very soon." Abhishek explained that after his dismissal with the team on 60, the plan was simply to bat time. With help for pacers on a cold December evening in Dharamshala, caution was key. "The ball was swinging and seaming a bit, so we just needed to knock it around and finish the game," he said. For Abhishek, patience with Gill is essential. "It's only a matter of time," he insisted, confident that belief will soon be rewarded on the biggest stage.

India Cricketer Defies No-Interaction Order, Wins Hearts at U19 Asia Cup

DUBAI

Amid strict directives discouraging on-field interaction between Indian and Pakistani players, a touching act of sportsmanship stole the spotlight during the ongoing ACC Men's Under-19 Asia Cup. An Indian Under-19 cricketer briefly set aside rivalry to help an opponent, drawing widespread praise across social media. During Pakistan's batting innings, Indian pacer Kishan Kumar Singh noticed Pakistan batter Huzaifa Ahsan struggling with untied shoelaces. In a moment caught on camera, Singh calmly knelt down and tied the laces for his rival before resuming play. The clip quickly went viral, with fans hailing the youngster for upholding cricket's spirit.

The gesture stood out given the prevailing no-interaction stance, shaped by instructions from the Board of Control for Cricket in India, which has seen Indian teams avoid handshakes and friendly exchanges with Pakistan counterparts at recent tournaments. While teams maintained protocol at the toss and post-match ceremonies, Singh's action offered a refreshing contrast.

Reactions poured in from both sides of the border, with many praising the teenager's maturity and empathy. Observers noted that such moments have historical precedent, recalling instances where senior cricketers from both nations quietly helped each other with equipment on the field. However, such gestures have become increasingly rare in recent times. On the cricketing front, India dominated the contest, crushing Pakistan Under-19 by 90 runs. Batting first, India posted 240 before being bowled out, with solid contributions across the middle order. Pakistan were then dismissed for 150 in 41.2 overs, despite Huzaifa Ahsan's valiant 70. Kishan Kumar Singh capped his memorable outing with two wickets, adding substance to a day already defined by his act of goodwill.

In a tournament marked by intensity and rivalry, a simple act reminded fans that respect and humanity can still shine through competitive sport.

Messi Event Fiasco Will Affect Bengal for 50 Years: AIFF Chief Chaubey

KOLKATA

All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Kalyan Chaubey warned that the chaos surrounding football superstar Lionel Messi's event at Salt Lake Stadium could damage Bengal's sporting reputation for decades.

The opening leg of Messi's four-city 'GOAT India Tour 2025' in Kolkata descended into disorder on Saturday morning amid serious crowd management and security lapses. The Argentine great was surrounded and jostled by selfie-seeking politicians and VIPs, forcing the programme to be cut short. Messi, accompanied by Inter Miami teammates Luis Suárez and Rodrigo de Paul, wrapped up the event within 20 minutes before leaving for Hyderabad later in the evening.

The abrupt end triggered unrest among fans, many of whom had spent thousands of rupees to attend the programme. Angry spectators vandalised parts of the Salt Lake Stadium, leaving behind broken chairs, damaged canopies and litter strewn across the pitch. Calling the episode "very unfortunate" for a city long regarded as the Mecca of Indian football, Chaubey said the fallout would be felt far beyond the immediate embarrassment.

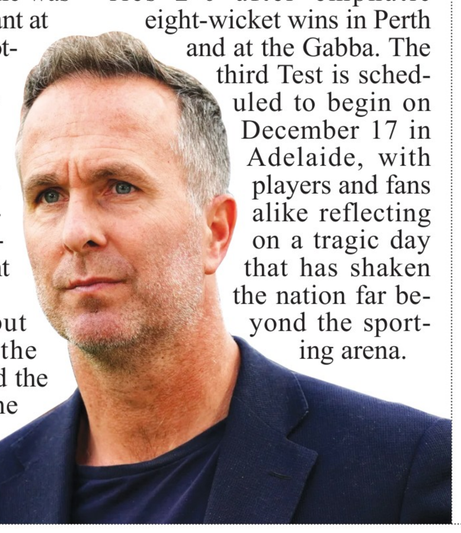
Michael Vaughan Caught in Bondi Beach Shooting Horror, Returns Home Safely

SYDNEY

A deadly shooting at Bondi Beach on December 14 plunged Australia into shock, leaving at least 12 people dead and several others injured in what authorities have labelled a terrorist attack. Panic gripped the iconic seaside suburb after two armed men arrived in a vehicle and opened fire on the public during the busy evening hours.

Eyewitnesses said the attack began around 6.40 pm when the assailants stepped out of their car and started shooting indiscriminately, sending crowds fleeing for cover. In the chaos, one of the attackers was reportedly overpowered by a civilian, while the second was later killed in a police encounter. Authorities have since confirmed the arrest of Naveed Akram, who remains in custody as investigations continue.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan, currently in Australia as part of the broadcast team for the Ashes series, found himself caught in the middle of the terrifying ordeal. Vaughan revealed that he was trapped inside a restaurant at Bondi Beach as the shooting unfolded nearby.



Taking to X, formerly Twitter, Vaughan described the experience as frightening but confirmed that he had returned home safely. "Being locked in a restaurant in Bondi was scary.

Now home safe, but thanks so much to the emergency services and the guy who confronted the terrorist. Thoughts with all who have been affected," he wrote.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese condemned the violence and officially termed the incident an act of terrorism, praising the swift response of emergency services and police in neutralising the threat and preventing further loss of life.

Meanwhile, cricketing action continues despite the sombre backdrop. Australia currently lead the Ashes series 2-0 after emphatic eight-wicket wins in Perth and at the Gabba. The third Test is scheduled to begin on December 17 in Adelaide, with players and fans alike reflecting on a tragic day that has shaken the nation far beyond the sporting arena.

IPL 2026 Auction: Six Uncapped Stars Franchises Could Target

NEW DELHI

The IPL 2026 auction promises excitement for both marquee signings and uncapped Indian talent. Young players from domestic tournaments have emerged as potential game-changers. Kartik Sharma (Rajasthan), 19, impressed with a century on debut and a 139-run innings in a 263-run partnership. Prashant Veer (Uttar Pradesh), 20, is a left-arm spinner and hard-hitting batter, excelling in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. Sunny Sandhu (Tamil Nadu), 22, is a seam-bowling all-rounder known for explosive finishing. Harsh Tyagi (Delhi) offers leadership and slow left-arm spin.

Salil Arora (Punjab) provides middle-order firepower, while Raj Limbani (Baroda) brings pace and consistency. These uncapped stars are auction highlights.

Lochab Sacked as WFI Secretary; RSPB Top Senior Nationals

CHENNAI

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) removed Prem Chand Lochab from the post of secretary general during its general council meeting held on the sidelines of the Senior National Championships in Ahmedabad. Incumbent vice-president and Delhi Amateur Wrestling Association chief Jai Prakash was appointed acting secretary general.

Lochab, a former secretary of the Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB), had been served a show-cause notice for allegedly engaging in anti-federation activities. According to WFI sources, two reminders were also issued, but his failure to respond prompted the council to act. "The general council approved the decision and made Jai Prakash acting secretary general," a WFI official said.

Elected in December 2023, Lochab was among the few candidates outside the faction led by former WFI president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh to secure a post. He entered the elections through the Gujarat State Wrestling Association. Another non-aligned winner was Devender Kadyan, elected senior vice-president, while the remaining posts were claimed by Brij Bhushan's faction.

The council also replaced vice-president Kartar Singh with V.N. Prasood. Kartar Singh, who represented Punjab during the WFI elections, lost his position after a fresh election in the state association left him out of the newly elected body. Former WFI secretary general Prasood was subsequently inducted.

On the mat, the Railway Sports Promotion Board capped a dominant campaign by winning the men's Greco-Roman team championship on Sunday, adding to their men's freestyle title secured a day earlier. RSPB also finished runners-up in women's wrestling, earning enough points across all three styles to claim the overall team championship.

The Services Sports Control Board finished second overall, while Haryana placed third. In Greco-Roman, RSPB and SSCB were tied on 190 points, but Railways edged ahead by securing more gold medals — four compared to SSCB's three — to seal the title at the senior nationals.

Team India Makes History with Maiden Squash World Cup Triumph

CHENNAI

Team India etched its name into squash history, clinching its first-ever Squash World Cup title with a commanding victory over top-seeded Hong Kong in the final held in Chennai. The landmark triumph capped a flawless campaign and underlined India's rapid rise on the global squash stage.

The title marked a significant leap from India's previous best finish — a bronze medal at the 2023 edition — and showcased the team's growing depth and consistency. India were dominant throughout the tournament, not dropping a single match on their way to lifting the trophy. They opened the group stage with emphatic 4-0 wins over Switzerland and Brazil, before sweeping aside South Africa 3-0 in the quarterfinals. A stunning 3-0 victory over defending champions and two-time winners Egypt in the semifinals set up the title clash.

In the final, veteran Joshna Chinappa gave India a dream start, defeating world No. 37 Lee Ka Yi 3-1 in the opening women's singles rubber. Asian Games medallist Abhay Singh then doubled the lead with a clinical 3-0 win over Alex Lau in just 19 minutes.

The decisive moment came from 17-year-old prodigy Anahat Singh, who produced a composed performance to beat world No. 31 Tomato Ho 3-0. Her victory sealed a historic clean sweep, making it unnecessary for national men's champion Velavan Senthilkumar to take the court.

"An unbelievable evening," Abhay Singh said. "To do this with such legendary teammates makes it very special."

India became only the fourth nation, after Australia, England and Egypt, to win the Squash World Cup in its five editions. The triumph carries added significance with squash set to make its Olympic debut at the LA 2028 Olympics, heralding a promising future for the sport in India.

PM Modi Congratulates Indian Squash Team on World Cup Triumph

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated the Indian squash team for scripting history by winning their maiden title at the SDAT Squash World Cup 2025 in Chennai. In a post on X, the Prime Minister praised Joshna Chinappa, Abhay Singh, Velavan Senthil Kumar and Anahat Singh for their "tremendous dedication and determination," saying their achievement had made the nation proud. Modi noted that the historic triumph against top-seeded Hong Kong would significantly boost squash's popularity among Indian youth. India clinched the title with a dominant 3-0 victory in the final.

Maybe You Can't Say Gukesh is a Pure World No. 1: Caruana

MUMBAI

US Super Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana believes it is perfectly normal for a reigning world champion to not necessarily be the outright No. 1 player in the world, offering a balanced assessment of India's world champion D Gukesh. Speaking on the sidelines of the Global Chess League in Mumbai, Caruana said that while Gukesh may not have enjoyed his strongest year so far, comparisons with former world champion Ding Liren were unfair.

"Maybe you can't say that he's the pure No. 1 in the world right now, but that's super normal," Caruana said. "The world champion isn't necessarily the pure No. 1 in the world." He added that Gukesh remains firmly among the elite and is better placed than Ding was during his reign. "He hasn't had a great year, but I wouldn't be surprised if next year is very strong for him," he noted.

Currently ranked third in the world with a classical rating of 2795, Caruana has been a fixture at the top level for nearly a decade. The 33-year-old will compete in his sixth consecutive Candidates Tournament in 2026 and is among the favourites based on ratings, alongside compatriot Hikaru Nakamura. However, Caruana cautioned against underestimating the competition. "There are no easy games in the Candidates. Everyone is extremely motivated," he said. Caruana also identified India's R Praggnanandhaa as a serious contender for the world title. "He definitely has a realistic chance. He already has experience from the previous edition," he said, while adding that it is difficult to single out a clear favourite.

Inter Milan Go Top as Rivals Milan, Napoli Slip in Serie A

Inter seize chance as Milan draw, Napoli lose, reshaping tight Serie A title race

MILAN

Inter Milan moved to the top of Serie A after capitalising on dropped points by title rivals AC Milan and Napoli, edging past Genoa while their challengers stumbled.

Inter secured a 2-1 win away at relegation-threatened Genoa to move one point clear of city rivals AC Milan and two ahead of Napoli. Defender Yann-Aurel Bisseck set the tone with an early goal before captain Lautaro Martínez doubled the lead shortly before halftime. Genoa made things nervy late on when Vitinha pulled one back, dribbling past two defenders and goalkeeper Yann Sommer, but Inter held firm to claim three crucial points.

At San Siro, AC Milan were held to a dramatic 2-2 draw by Sassuolo despite a breakthrough performance from teenager Davide Bartesaghi, who scored his first two senior goals. After Ismaël Koné's opener for Sassuolo, Bartesaghi struck either side of halftime to put Milan ahead, only for substitute Armand Laurienté to equalise in the 77th minute. Laurienté nearly won it late on, rattling the post after a solo run.

Napoli missed the opportunity to go top themselves, falling 1-0 away to Udinese. The hosts had two goals disallowed before Jurgen Ekkelenkamp finally broke the deadlock with a stunning long-range strike. Napoli squandered late chances, with Rasmus Højlund firing over from close range.

Elsewhere, Juventus beat Bologna 1-0 to climb into fifth, while Hellas Verona boosted their survival hopes with a 2-1 win at bottom side Fiorentina.

With momentum firmly shifting, Inter now lead a tightening Serie A title race as the season approaches its decisive phase.

Kane Rescues Bayern from First Bundesliga Loss against Mainz

BERLIN

Late Harry Kane penalty spares Bayern embarrassment, preserves unbeaten Bundesliga season

Bayern Munich stayed unbeaten in the Bundesliga after Harry Kane struck late to salvage a dramatic 2-2 draw against last-placed FSV Mainz 05.

Bayern looked on course for a shock defeat when Lee Jae-sung headed Mainz ahead in the 67th minute, sparking celebrations among the visiting fans. However, Kane converted a penalty in the 87th minute to rescue the runaway league leaders and maintain their perfect record. The match marked Mainz's first Bundesliga outing under new coach Urs Fischer, recently appointed after Bo Henriksen's departure. Despite Bayern's dominance, the visitors showed resilience and capitalised on rare defensive lapses. Bayern had controlled proceedings early and opened the scoring in the 29th minute when teenage sensation Lennart Karl tapped in Serge Gnabry's cross. The goal was Bayern's 50th of the league season, a Bundesliga record after just 14 rounds.

Mainz responded before halftime through 18-year-old defender Kacper Potulski, who headed home his first Bundesliga goal in only his second appearance. The visitors then stunned the Allianz Arena after the break as Lee Jae-sung converted Stefan Bell's deep cross to make it 2-1.

Bayern coach Vincent Kompany introduced attacking reinforcements, including Senegal forward Nicolas Jackson, while Alphonso Davies returned for his first league appearance in nine months following a serious knee injury.

Relief finally arrived when Potulski was penalised for holding Kane inside the box. The England captain calmly dispatched the spot-kick for his league-leading 17th goal of the season. Mainz held on through seven minutes of stoppage time, celebrating a draw that felt like a victory.

Police reveal lapses behind Messi Kolkata chaos arrest

KOLKATA

The chaos that marred Lionel Messi's Kolkata appearance during the GOAT India Tour 2025 has been traced to serious organisational lapses, Bidhannagar Police Commissioner Mukesh Kumar revealed on Monday, following the arrest of chief tour organiser Satadru Dutta.

Scheduled as a nearly two-hour event at the Salt Lake Stadium on December 13, the programme was cut short to just 20 minutes after crowd unrest forced Messi's early exit, the commissioner said. "When you cut a 1 hour 40-minute event to 20 minutes, this is bound to happen. It is a fallout of mismanagement," Kumar stated.

Dutta, whose bail plea was rejected by a Bidhannagar court, was remanded to 14-day judicial custody. Police noted several lapses: the guest list had not been shared, a no-water-bottle policy was ignored, and vendors had entered without proper checks. CCTV footage is being scrutinised, and further arrests are expected.

"The crowd began shouting 'boo boo' at 11:48 am, moments before Messi left. His security team escorted him out, after which spectators threw bottles, chairs, and other objects onto the field," the officer added.

Man City, Aston Villa win, chase Premier League leader Arsenal

MANCHESTER

Manchester City and Aston Villa both recorded crucial wins to remain firmly in contention with Premier League leader Arsenal.

Arsenal had moved five points clear at the summit with a 2-1 victory over Wolves on Saturday, but their closest challengers responded a day later. City cruised to a 3-0 win away at Crystal Palace, while Villa twice came from behind to beat West Ham United 3-2 in a thrilling encounter at the London Stadium. City now trail Arsenal by two points, with Villa a further point back in third.

City's victory at Selhurst Park carried extra significance after their FA Cup final defeat to Palace last season. Erling Haaland opened the scoring late in the first half with his 101st Premier League goal and added a second from the penalty spot in the 89th minute, taking his league tally to 17. Phil Foden struck City's second, as Pep Guardiola's side asserted control. "We are learning," Guardiola said, admitting the title race remains wide open.

At West Ham, Villa showed resilience and attacking depth. Morgan Rogers scored twice in the second half to extend Villa's winning streak to nine matches in all competitions. The hosts had led early through Mateus Fernandes and again via Jarrod Bowen, but Konstantinos Mavropanos' own goal and Rogers' brace sealed the comeback. Under Unai Emery, Villa have now lost just once in their last 13 league games.

Elsewhere, Nottingham Forest thrashed Tottenham 3-0 to ease relegation fears, Sunderland edged Newcastle 1-0 in the Tyne-Wear derby, and Leeds drew 1-1 with Brentford as Dominic Calvert-Lewin continued his scoring run.

VALIANT LALIT OVERCOMES MORE TO RETAIN GRECO-ROMAN 55KG CROWN

AHMEDABAD

Defending champion Lalit showcased resilience and skill to retain his Greco-Roman 55kg title at the Senior National Wrestling Championships, defeating fellow Services wrestler Vishvajit More in a thrilling final at the Veer Savarkar Sports Complex, Naranpura. Lalit, who has previously dominated the category, came from behind in the final moments to pin More, a two-time World Under-23 bronze medallist. The victory underscored his tactical prowess and physical endurance, as he withstood More's early aggression and turned the tide with precise holds and counters. The match had the audience at the edge of their seats, reflecting the high stakes and competitive spirit of the championship.

This gold medal contributed crucial points to the Services team, which remained neck-and-neck with Railways in the overall team standings. Both teams finished the championship with 190 points each, highlighting the closely contested nature of the tournament.

Mbappé Scores on Return as Real Madrid Beat Alaves, Easing Pressure

MADRID

Kylian Mbappé marked his return from injury with a superb goal as Real Madrid secured a much-needed 2-1 win away to Alaves in La Liga, easing the pressure on coach Xabi Alonso after a difficult run of results.

Madrid had managed just two wins from their previous eight matches in all competitions and were coming off a 2-1 home defeat to Manchester City in the Champions League, a result that drew jeers from the Santiago Bernabéu crowd. The victory in Vitoria-Gasteiz lifted some of the tension and moved Madrid back within four points of league leaders Barcelona.

Mbappé, who missed the midweek Champions League clash because of a minor injury, opened the scoring in the 24th minute. Operating from the left, the French forward beat his marker with a sharp run before curling a precise finish into the top corner. It was his 26th goal of the season in all competitions for Madrid.

Alaves responded in the second half and equalised in the 68th minute through Carlos Vicente, who finished a swift counterattack.

However, Madrid regained the lead soon after when Rodrygo converted from close range following a driving run and assist by Vinícius Júnior. The Brazilian winger later embraced Alonso on the touchline, a notable show of support amid reports of unrest in the dressing room. "It's fundamental that we stay united," Alonso said.

"The team competed well and took an important step forward today."

The match also carried personal milestones for Madrid players. Goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois recorded his 200th win in 310 appearances since joining the club in 2018, while defender Antonio Rüdiger played his 100th league game for Madrid. With injuries at left back, Alonso handed a start to 19-year-old Víctor Valdepeñas from the reserve team. Elsewhere, Celta Vigo claimed their first home league win of the season, Oviedo dismissed coach Luis Carrión after a heavy defeat, and the Levante-Villarreal match was postponed due to severe weather.

Shafali Verma Named ICC Women's Player of the Month after WC Heroics

NEW DELHI

Shafali Verma has been named the ICC Women's Player of the Month for November 2025 following her match-winning performance in India's ICC Women's Cricket World Cup final triumph over South Africa. In the title clash at Dr DY Patil Stadium, Navi Mumbai, Shafali scored a brilliant 87 runs at the top of the order, forging a 104-run opening partnership with Smriti Mandhana. It was her highest ODI score and first half-century in more than three years, providing India with a solid foundation in the final. Shafali then demonstrated her all-round prowess with the ball, returning figures of 7-0-36-2, dismissing key South African batters Sune Luus and Marizanne Kapp. Harmanpreet Kaur's inspired decision to hand her the ball paid dividends as India bowled out the Proteas for 246, securing a 52-run victory and ending India's long wait for an ICC title on home soil.

"My first ICC Women's Cricket World Cup experience didn't go as I expected, but it ended far better than I could have imagined," Verma said. "I'm truly honoured to be named the Women's Player of the Month for November and dedicate this award to my teammates, coaches, family, and everyone who supported me. We win and lose as a team, the same goes for this award."

Shafali's journey to the final was far from straightforward. Initially left out of the squad, she was only recalled after Pratika Rawal's injury against Bangladesh. After a modest 10 in the semi-final against Australia, she saved her best performance for the final, earning the Player of the Match award.

Shafali is next set to play in the five-match T20I series against Sri Lanka starting December 21 in Visakhapatnam and will continue with Delhi Capitals in the Women's Premier League, having been retained by the franchise.

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